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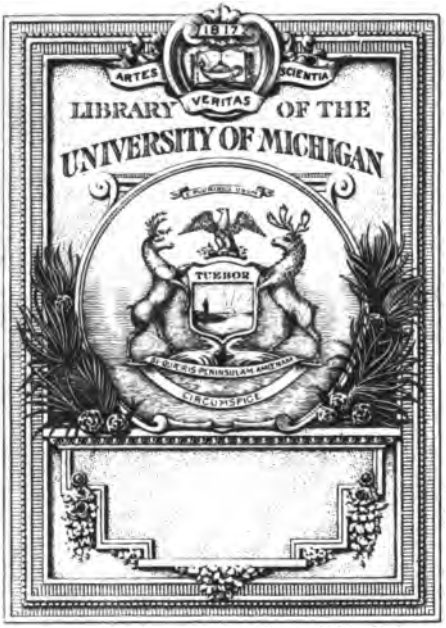


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THE

# WORKS

OF THE

RIGHT REVEREND

# GEORGE HORNE, D.D.

LATE

LORD BISHOP OF NORWICH;

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED

## MEMOIRS OF HIS LIFE, STUDIES,

AND

## WRITINGS,

BY WILLIAM JONES, M.A. F.R.S.

ONE OF HIS LORDSHIP'S CHAPLAINS,

AND LONG HIS MOST INTIMATE AND CONFIDENTIAL FRIEND.

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VOL. II.

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# PREFACE.

HAVING been prevented, for a time, by the discharge of a laborious but highly honourable office, from performing the more immediate duties of my profession, I was yet desirous, that I might not seem to lose the clergyman in the magistrate, of still continuing to do something towards promoting the great end and purpose of life. And though the frequent returns of business gave little hopes of composing fresh discourses, its intervals, I thought, might suffice to digest and publish some which had been already composed.

This form of publication is generally supposed less advantageous, at present, than any other. But it may be questioned whether the supposition does justice to the age, when we consider only the respect which has so recently been paid to the sermons of the learned and elegant Dr. Blair: and greater respect cannot be paid them than they deserve.

The multitude of old sermons affords no argument against the publication of new ones; since new ones will be read when old ones are neglected; and almost all mankind are, in this respect, *Athenians*.

Besides, there is a *taste* in moral and religious, as well as in other compositions, which varies in different ages, and may very lawfully and innocently be indulged. Thousands received instruction and consolation formerly from sermons which would not now be endured. The preachers of them served their generation, and are blessed for evermore. But because provision was made for the wants of the last cen-

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tury in one way, there is no reason why it should not be made for the wants of this, in another. The next will behold a set of writers of a fashion suited to it, when our discourses shall, in their turn, be antiquated and forgotten among men; though if any good be wrought by them in this their day, our hope is, with that of faithful Nehemiah, that our God will remember us concerning them!

But as the productions of every author, who adds to the number, are expected to contain something new, either in matter or manner, it will naturally be asked, what are my pretensions; I will beg leave to deliver my sentiments on the subject in the words of the excellent and amiable Fenelon, extracted from the last of his most admirable *Dialogues on the Eloquence of the Pulpit.*

"I would have a preacher explain the whole plan of "religion, and unfold every part of it in the most intelligi- "ble manner, by showing the origin and establishment, the "tradition and connexion, of its principles, its sacraments, "and institutions.

"For every thing in Scripture is connected; and this "connexion is, perhaps, the most extraordinary and won- "derful thing to be seen in the sacred writings.

"An audience of persons who had heard the chief points "of the Mosaic history and law well explained, would be "able to receive far more benefit from an explication of the "truths of the Gospel, than the generality of Christians are "now.

"Preachers speak every day to the people of the Scrip- "tures, the church, the patriarchs, the law, the Gospel; of "sacrifice, of Moses, and Aaron, and Melchisedek; of "Christ, the prophets, and apostles: but there is not suffi- "cient care taken to instruct men in the meaning of these "things, and the characters of these holy persons.

"This way of having recourse to the first foundations of "religion would be so far from seeming low, that it would "give most discourses that force and beauty which they "generally want; since the hearers can never be instructed

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"or persuaded in the mysteries of religion, if you do not "trace things back to their source.

"For example—How can you make them understand "what the church says, after St. Paul, that Jesus Christ is "our PASSOVER, if you do not explain to them the Jewish "passover, which was appointed to be a perpetual memo-"rial of their deliverance from Egypt, and to typify a more "important redemption that was reserved for Messiah?

"Almost every thing in religion is historical. The best "way of proving its truth, is to represent it justly; for then "it carries its own evidence along with it. A coherent "view of the chief facts relative to any person or transac-"tion, should be given in a concise, lively, close, pathetic "manner, accompanied with such moral reflections as arise "from the several circumstances, and may best instruct the "hearers.

"A preacher ought to affect people by strong images; "but it is from the Scripture that he should learn to make "powerful impressions. There he may clearly discover "the way to render sermons plain and popular, without "losing the force and dignity they ought always to possess.

"If the clergy applied themselves to this mode of teach-"ing, we should then have two different sorts of preachers. "They who are not endowed with a great share of vivacity, "would explain the Scripture clearly, without imitating its "lively and animated manner; and if they expounded the "word of God judiciously, and supported their doctrine by "an exemplary life, they would be very good preachers. "They would employ what St. Ambrose requires, a chaste, "simple, clear style, full of weight and gravity, without "affecting elegance, or despising the smoothness and graces "of language. The other sort, being of a poetical turn of "mind, would explain the holy book in its own style and "figures; and by that means become accomplished preach-"ers. The former would instruct their hearers with soli-"dity and perspicuity; the latter would add to this instruc-"tion the sublimity, the vehemence, and divine enthusi-

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"asm of the Scripture, which would be (if I may so say)
"entire and living in them, as much as it can be in men
"who are not miraculously inspired from above."

This, reader, is the model which I have chosen, and after which I have humbly endeavoured to work. I count not myself to have attained—Far, very far indeed from it; as you will too soon discover. I have not yet been able by any means to satisfy myself; nor can I hope to satisfy you. I have done as well as I could; and know not that it will be in my power to do better. Nobler and more extensive ideas rise before me; but planning and executing are very different things. Time hastens forward; and life, attended with its cares, perhaps its sorrows, will quickly have run its course. Accept such as I can give, and pardon errors and imperfections. I stand at the door of the temple, with my torch: if you would view its glories, enter in, and there dwell for ever.

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# DISCOURSES,

*&c.*

## DISCOURSE I.

### THE CREATION OF MAN.

GENESIS, I. 26.

*And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.*

CURIOSITY naturally prompts us to inquire into the records of the family, or society, to which we belong. Every little incident that befell our ancestors, is collected with care, and remembered with pleasure. The relation it bears to us gives it consequence in our eyes, though, in the eyes of others, it may seem to have none. The mind, in its progress, finds attention excited, as the velocity of a falling body is increased; nor can it repose itself at ease on any account, which stops short of the original and first founder of the community.



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Every motive of this sort conspires to animate our researches into the origination of mankind, and the history of our common progenitor. We cannot but earnestly and anxiously wish to be acquainted with the circumstances relative to the father of that family, of which all nations are parts; to discover and survey the root of that tree whose branches have overspread the earth.

Nor can such investigation be deemed matter of curiosity only. To form proper ideas of man, it is necessary we should view him as he came from the hands of his Creator. We must know in what state he was placed, what were the duties resulting from that state, and what the powers whereby he was enabled to perform them. We must learn, whether he be now in the same state; or whether an alteration in his state may not have subjected him to new wants, and new obligations. Upon a knowledge of these particulars, every system of religion and morality must be constructed, which is designed for the use of men. A system in which the consideration of these hath no place, is like a course of diet prescribed by a physician unacquainted with his patient's constitution, and with the nature of the disease under which he has the misfortune to labour.

It is obvious to remark, that this knowledge of human nature, of what it was at the beginning, and what alterations have since happened in it, is a knowledge to the attainment of which no strength of genius, no depth of reasoning, no subtilty of metaphysical disquisition, can ever lead us. It is a matter of fact, and must be ascertained, as matters of fact are,

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by evidence and testimony. But he only who made man, can inform us how man was made, with what endowments, and for what purposes. If he hath not done it, the world is, of necessity, left in utter ignorance of so capital a point. And this reflection alone may supply the place of a thousand arguments, to convince us that he hath done it.

We find an opinion current through Heathen antiquity that all is not right with the human race; that things were not at first as they are now, but that a change hath been introduced for the worse. When the philosophers tell us, that mankind were sent upon the earth to do penance for crimes by them committed in a pre-existent state; what is it but saying that man once was upright and happy, but that, ceasing to be upright, he ceased to be happy; and that natural evil is the consequence and punishment of moral? Nor is it at all difficult to discern, through the fictions of the poets, those truths which gave birth to them; while we read of a golden age, when righteousness and peace kissed each other; of a man framed of clay, and animated by a spark of celestial fire; of a woman endowed with every gift and grace from above; and of the fatal casket, out of which, when opened by her, a flight of calamities overspread the earth; but not without a reserve of HOPE, that, at some future period of refreshment and restitution, they should be done away. Such are the shadowy scenes, which, by the faint glimmering of tradition reflected from an original revelation, present themselves in that night of the world, the era of pagan fable and delusion, when the imaginations of poetry and the conjectures of



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philosophy were equally unable to supply the information which had been long lost, concerning the origin of the world, of man, and of evil.

With this information we are furnished by the writings of Moses, penned under the direction of Him who giveth to man the spirit of understanding, for the instruction of ages and generations. We are told by whom the matter, of which our system is composed, was brought into being; and in what manner the several objects around us were gradually and successively formed, till the whole, completely finished, and surveyed by its great Author, was pronounced *good*, or fit, in every respect, to answer the end for which it was designed.

After this, are related the particulars concerning the formation of man; the time of his production; the resolution taken upon the occasion; the materials of which he was composed; the divine image in which God created him; and the dominion over the creatures with which he was invested. It is intended in the following discourse, to offer such considerations as may be of use towards the explanation and illustration of these particulars in their order.

With regard to the *time* of man's formation, we may observe of the divine procedure, what is true of every human plan, concerted with wisdom and foresight; that which was first in intention, was last in execution. Man, for whom all things were made, was himself made last of all. We are taught to follow the heavenly Artist, step by step, first in the production of the inanimate elements, next of vegetable, and then of animal life, till we come to the master-

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piece of the creation, man endued with reason and intellect. The house being built, its inhabitant appeared; the feast being set forth, the guest was introduced; the theatre being decorated and illuminated, the spectator was admitted, to behold the splendid and magnificent scenery in the heavens above and the earth beneath; to view the bodies around him moving in perfect order and harmony, and every creature performing the part allotted it in the universal drama; that seeing he might understand, and understanding, adore its supreme Author and Director.

Not that, even in the original and perfect state of his intellectual powers, he was left to demonstrate the being of a God, either *a priori* or *a posteriori*. His Creator, we find, immediately manifested himself to him, and conversed with him, informing him, without all doubt, of what had passed previous to his own existence, which otherwise he never could have known; instructing him how and for what purpose the world and man were made, and to whom he was bound to ascribe all praise and glory on that account. The loss of this instruction occasioned some of his descendants, in after ages, to worship the creature instead of the Creator. Ignorant of him who gave the sun for a light by day, they fell prostrate before that bright image of its Maker's glory, which, to the eye of sense, appeared to be the god that governed the world.

The other parts of this system were produced by the word of the Creator. "He spake, and it was "done." The elements were his servants: "He

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"said to one, Go, and it went; to another, Come, "and it came; to a third, Do this," and the commission was instantly executed. But to the formation of man (with reverential awe, and after the manner of men, be it spoken) he seems more immediately to have addressed his power and wisdom. "Let us make man;" all things are now ready; let the work of creation be completed and crowned by the production of its possessor and lord, who is to use, to enjoy, and to rule over it: "Let "us make man."

The phraseology in which this *resolution* is couched, is remarkable; "Let *us* make man;" but the Old Testament furnishes more instances of a similar kind: "Behold man is become *like one of us;* Let *us* go "down, and confound their language; Whom shall "*we* send, and who will go for *us?*" These plural forms, thus used by the Deity, demand our attention.

Three solutions of the question have been offered.

The first is that given by the Jews, who tell us, that in these forms, God speaks of himself and his angels. But may we not ask, upon this occasion—"Who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who "hath been his counsellor?" With which of the angels did he, at any time, vouchsafe to share his works and his attributes? Could they have been his coadjutors in the work of creation, which he so often claims to himself, declaring he will not give the glory of it to another? Do we believe—do the Jews believe—did any body ever believe, that man was

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made by angels, or made in the image and likeness of angels? Upon this opinion, therefore, we need not spend any more time. We know from whence it came, and for what end it was devised and propagated.

A second account of the matter is, that the King of heaven adopts the style employed by the kings of the earth; who frequently speak of themselves in the plural number, to express dignity and majesty. But doth it seem at all reasonable to imagine, that God should borrow his way of speaking from a king, before man was created upon the earth? The contrary supposition would surely carry the air of more probability with it; namely, that because the Deity originally used this mode of expression, therefore kings, considering themselves as his delegates and representatives, afterwards did the same. But, however this might be, the interpretation, if admitted, will not suffice to clear the point. For, as it has been judiciously observed, though a king and governor may say *us* and *we*, there is certainly no figure of speech, that will allow any single person to say, "one of us," when he speaks only of himself. It is a phrase that can have no meaning, unless there be more persons than one concerned.

What, then, should hinder us from accepting the third solution, given by the best expositors, ancient and modern, and drawn from this consideration, that, in the unity of the Divine Essence, there is a plurality of Persons, co-equal and co-eternal, who might say, with truth and propriety, "Let us make man;" and, "Man is become like one of us?" Of such a

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personality revelation informs us; it is that upon which the economy of man's redemption is founded; his creation, as well as that of the world, is in different passages attributed to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; what more natural, therefore, than that, at his production, this form of speech should be used by the Divine Persons? What more rational than to suppose, that a doctrine so important to the human race, was communicated from the beginning, that men might know whom they worshipped, and how they ought to worship? What other good and sufficient reason can be given, why the name of God, in use among believers from the first, should likewise be in the *plural* number, connected with verbs and pronouns in the *singular*[a]? It is true, we Christians, with the New Testament in our hands, may not want these arguments to prove the doctrine: but why should we overlook, or slight, such very valuable evidenee of its having been revealed and received in the church of God from the foundation of the world? It is a satisfaction, it is a comfort, to reflect that, in this momentous article of our faith, we have patriarchs and prophets for our fathers; that they lived and that they died in the belief of it; that the God[b] of Adam, of Noah, and of Abraham, is likewise our God; and that, when we adore him in three persons, and give glory to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, we do as it was done in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be.

[a] ברא אלהים Gen. i. 1. [b] אלהים.

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Proceed we to consider the *materials* of which man was composed.

"The word of the Lord once came to the prophet "Jeremiah[c], saying, Arise, and go down to the pot-"ter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my "words. Then he went down to the potter's house, "and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheel. And "the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Be-"hold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye "in my hand."

A scene like this is presented to our imaginations by the words of Moses: "The Lord God formed "man out of the dust of the ground;" he moulded[d] or modelled him as a potter doth; we see the work, as it were, upon the wheel, rising and growing under the hands of the divine Artificer!

The human body was not made of the celestial elements, light and air, but of the more gross terrestrial matter, as being designed to receive and communicate notices of terrestrial objects, by organs of a nature similar to them. In this instance, as in another since, God seemeth to have "chosen the "base things of the world, to confound things honour-"able and mighty[e]," when, of the dust of the ground, he composed a frame, superior, in rank and dignity, to the heavens and all their hosts. They whose profession leads them to examine the structure of this astonishing piece of mechanism, these men see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the formation of the human body. A contemplation of its parts,

[c] Jer. xviii. 1. [d] יצר. [e] 1 Cor. i. 28.

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and their disposition, brought Galen upon his knees, in adoration of the wisdom with which the whole is contrived; and incited him to challenge any one, upon an hundred years' study, to tell how any the least fibre or particle could have been more commodiously placed, either for use or beauty. While the world shall last, genius and diligence will be producing fresh proofs that we are "fearfully and wonderfully made;" that "marvellous are the works," and, above all, this capital work, of the Almighty; and that the hand which made it must needs be verily and indeed divine.

Into the body of man, thus constructed, we learn from Moses, that God "breathed the breath of life, "and man became a living soul." The question here will be, Whether these words are intended to denote the rational and immortal soul, or the sensitive and animal life?

They are certainly sometimes used in the lower of these acceptations. "Cease ye from man whose "breath[f] is in his nostrils. All creatures in whose "nostrils was the breath of life[g] died by the flood." By these texts it appears, that the terms *spirit* and *breath*[h] are used to signify that animal life, which is supported, mechanically, by respiration through the nostrils.

But they are likewise used for the rational and immortal soul; witness those words of the Psalmist, adopted by our Lord when expiring on the cross; "Into thy hands I commend my spirit[i]." So again

[f] נשמה. [g] נשמת רוח חיים. [h] רוח and נשמה. [i] רוחי.

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—"The spirit[k] shall return to God who gave it." And "The spirit of man[l] is the candle of the "Lord."

Spiritual essences and operations come not under the cognizance of those senses, which, during the present state of probation, God has been pleased to make the inlets of our ideas. They must, therefore, be represented and described to us, in the way of comparison and analogy, by such language as is commonly styled *figurative*, or *metaphorical*. Of animal life, begun and continued by respiration, we have a proper and sufficient knowledge. From a contemplation of that life, and the manner in which it is supported by the air, we are directed to frame our notions of a higher life, maintained by the influence of a higher principle. For this purpose, the terms which denote the former are borrowed to express the latter; and we find the words translated *spirit* and *breath*, sometimes used for one, and sometimes for the other.

But when we consider that man, as other Scriptures do testify, has within him a rational soul, an immortal spirit, which, on the dissolution of the body, returns to God who gave it; that, in this original description of his formation, we may reasonably expect to find both parts of his composition mentioned; and that a personal act of the Deity, that of inspiring the breath of life, is recorded with regard to him, which is not said of the other creatures; we can hardly do otherwise than conclude, that the

[k] רוח. [l] נשמת אדם.

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words were intended to denote, not the animal life only, but also another life communicated with it, and represented by it: in a word, that man consisteth of a body so organized as to be sustained in life by the action of the material elements upon it, and a rational, immortal soul, supported, in a similar manner, by the influence of a superior and spiritual agency.

We had occasion to observe above, that when the knowledge of the Creator, furnished at the beginning by revelation, had been lost in the Heathen world, men paid to the works of his hands that adoration which was due to him. The material elements were invested with divinity and immortality, and worshipped as gods. It may now be farther observed, that to the soul of man, considered as a portion of these elements, was attributed the same divinity and immortality; and thus things natural were substituted in the place of things spiritual, a proper notion of which could not then be attained, for want of that instruction from above, which directs us how to transfer our ideas from one to the other, and to believe in the latter as conceived through the medium of the former. So difficult has it ever been found, for the human mind to pass the bounds of matter, and to explore the invisible wonders of the spiritual world. And whoever observes the progress of that scheme which is once more set up against revelation, by some, in our own and a neighbouring nation, who affect the title of *philosophers* in opposition to that of *Christians*, and whose abilities one cannot but lament to see employed in this manner, will perceive

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its tendency to introduce *materialism*, and to carry us back again to that state of darkness, from which it pleased the Father of lights in mercy to deliver us by the Gospel of his Son.

But to return to the Mosaic account of man, of whose distinguishing excellencies we are taught to entertain the most exalted sentiments, when we are told, that he was made "in the *image* and likeness "of God." For what more can be said of a creature, than that he is made after the similitude of his Creator?

As "God is a Spirit," the similitude here spoken of must be a spiritual similitude; and the subject to which it relates must be the spiritual part of man, his rational and immortal soul.

To discover wherein such image and likeness consisted, what better method can we take than to inquire, wherein consist that divine image and likeness, which, as the Scriptures of the New Testament inform us, were restored in human nature, through the redemption and grace of Christ, who was manifested for that purpose? The image restored was the image lost; and the image lost was that in which Adam was created.

The expressions employed by the penmen of the New Testament, plainly point out to us this method of proceeding. We read of the new man, "which "after God is *created*[m];" and of man being "re-"newed after the image of him that *created* him[n];" and the like. The use of the term *created*, naturally

[m] Ephes. iv. 24. [n] Coloss. iii. 10.

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refers us to man's first creation, and leads us to parallel that with his renovation, or new creation, by which he re-obtained those excellences possessed at the beginning, but afterwards unhappily forfeited.

And what are these?—"Renewed in *knowledge*, "after the image of him that created him—Put on "the new man, which, after God, is created in *right-* "*eousness* and *true holiness*, οσιοτητι της αληθειας, the "*holiness* of, or according to, *truth*." The divine image, then, is to be found in the understanding and the will; in the understanding which knows the truth, and in the will which loves it. For when the understanding judges that to be true which with God is true, the man is "renewed in knowledge after the "image of him;" when the will loves the truth, and all its affections move in the pursuit and practice of it, the man is "new created, after God, in righteous- "ness and holiness." This divine image is restored in human nature by the word of Christ enlightening the understanding, and the grace of Christ rectifying the will. These are, in the end, to render man what he was at first created, according to that passage in the writings of king Solomon, which is the shortest and best comment upon the words of Moses—"God made man upright"—the original word° signifies *straight, direct;* there was no error in his understanding, no obliquity in his will. He who says this, says every thing. It is a full and comprehensive account of man in his original state; nothing can be added to it, or taken from it.

° ישר.

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Such, then, was Adam, in the day when God crowned him king in Eden, and invested him with sovereignty over the works of his hands; giving him *dominion* over "the fish of the sea, and over the "fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all "the earth, and over every creeping thing that "creepeth upon the earth."

It appears to have been the order of Providence, that while the flesh continued in subjection to the spirit, and man to God, so long the creatures should continue in subjection to man, as servants are subject to their lord and master. This original subjection we must suppose to have been universal and absolute. From the creatures man had much to learn, but nothing to fear. If, to answer the purposes of creation, or to convey to his mind ideas of his invisible enemies, any were at that time wild and noxious, with regard to him they were tame and harmless. In perfect security he saw, he considered, he admired. But when he rebelled against his God, the creatures renounced their allegiance to him, and became, in the hands of their common Creator, instruments of his punishment.—"The beasts of the field" were no longer "at peace with him." Yet, in consequence of the new covenant and promise to redeem man and the world, we find it said after the flood—"The "fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon "every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of "the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and "upon the fishes of the sea[p]." So far is the su-

[p] Gen. ix. 2.

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periority of the human species still preserved, that "every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, "and things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been "tamed of mankind[q]." In some cases, for the sake of eminently holy persons, favoured by Heaven on that account, the instincts of the most savage and ravenous have been suspended; as when some of every kind assembled and lodged together in the ark, and when the mouths of the lions were stopped in the den of Babylon, while the righteous and greatly beloved Daniel was there. The Redeemer of the world endued his disciples with the original privilege —"Behold I give you power to tread on serpents "and on scorpions; and nothing shall by any means "hurt you[r]." And, agreeably to such promise, St. Paul "shook off the viper into the fire, and felt no "harm[s]." The eighth Psalm is a beautiful representation of the extent of this privilege, as it was possessed, at the beginning, by the first Adam, and as it hath been since restored by the second—"O Lord "our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the "earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens. "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast "thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies, "that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger. "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fin-"gers, the moon and the stars which thou hast or-"dained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? "and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For "thou hast made him a little lower than the angels,

[q] James, iii. 7. [r] Luke, x. 19. [s] Acts, xxviii.

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"and hast crowned him with glory and honour. "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works "of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his "feet; all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of "the field, the fowl of the air, and the fish of the "sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of "the seas. O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy "name in all the earth!"

Let us indulge a few reflections on the foregoing particulars.

The imagination naturally endeavours to form some idea of the sensations that must have arisen in the mind of the first man, when, awaking into existence, with all his senses and faculties perfect, he beheld the glory and beauty of the new-created world. Faded as we must suppose its glory and its beauty now to be, enough still remains to excite continual wonder, praise, and adoration. Yet it is represented in the Scriptures of truth, as lying under a curse, as groaning and travailing in pain, and as little better than a prison, from which all, who are truly sensible of its condition and their own, wish and pray to be delivered into the liberty of the children of God. But if such be our prison, what notions are we led to form of those mansions, which our Lord is gone before to prepare for us in his Father's house? Creation was finished in six days; and we read that, "on "the seventh, God rested from all his work which he "created and made[t]." But the transgression of man would not suffer him to rest. "My Father," says

[t] Gen. ii. 2.



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the blessed Jesus, "worketh hitherto, and I work[u]." Sin made its way into the first creation, and is gradually destroying it, as a moth fretteth a garment.—"Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon "the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish "away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like "a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in "like manner[w]." "But we, according to his pro-"mise, look for new heavens and a new earth, where-"in dwelleth righteousness[x]." We read of one who, in vision, "saw a new heaven and a new earth, for "the first heaven and the first earth were passed "away[y]." When the new creation shall be finished and prepared, an act of omnipotence will be exerted, similar to that which passed at the formation of Adam. The Lord God will again "form man out "of the dust of the ground, and breathe into his "nostrils the breath of life." From his long sleep in the chamber of the grave, he will awake to behold the never-fading glories of a world which "will have "no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine "in it: for the Lord God and the Lamb," those brighter and inextinguishable luminaries, shall enlighten it for ever[z]. The Almighty shall again with complacency survey the works of his hands, and pronounce every thing he has made to be "very good;" he shall again rest on the seventh day; the children of the resurrection shall enter into his rest, and keep an eternal sabbath. Let us "comfort one another "with these words."

[u] John, v. 17. [w] Isa li. 6. [x] 2 Peter, iii. 13.
[y] Rev. xxi. [z] Rev. xxi. 23.

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A view of the different materials of which man is composed, may teach us to form a proper estimate of him. He stands between the two worlds, the natural and the spiritual, and partakes of both. His body is material, but its inhabitant descends from another system. His soul, like the world from which it comes, is immortal; but his body, like the world to which it belongs, is frail and perishable. From its birth it contains in it the seeds and principles of dissolution, towards which it tends every day and hour, by the very means that nourish and maintain it, and which no art can protract beyond a certain term. In spite of precaution and medicine, "the evil days will "come, and the years draw nigh, when he shall say, "I have no pleasure in them." Pains and sorrows will succeed each other, as "the clouds return after "the rain," blackening the face of heaven, and darkening the sources of light and joy. The hands, those once active and vigorous "keepers of the house," grown paralytic, "shall tremble;" and "the strong "men," those firm and able columns which supported it, shall "bow themselves," and sink under the weight. The external "grinders" of the food, the teeth, "shall cease, because they are few," and the work of mastication shall be imperfectly performed. Dim suffusion shall veil the organs of sight, "they "that look out of the windows shall be darkened." The doors, or valves, "shall be shut in the streets" or alleys of the body, when the digestive powers are weakened, and "the sound of the" internal "grind-"ing is low." Sleep, if it light upon the eyelids of age, will quickly remove again, and "he will rise up"



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at the time when the first "voice of the bird" claims the approach of the morning. "Al "daughters of music shall be brought low;" he hear no more the voice of singing men and sin women. Timidity and distrust will predomi and he will be alarmed at every thing; "he sha "afraid of that which is high, and fears shall b "the way." As the early "almond tree," whe flourishes in full blossom, his hoary head shal conspicuous in the congregation, the sure progno not of spring, alas! but of winter; he who, "the grasshopper," in the season of youth was sprightly in his motions, now scarce able to cr upon the earth, "shall be a burden" to himself; a the organs of sense being vitiated and impai "desire" and appetite "shall fail." The sp marrow, that "silver cord," with the infinite ran cations of the nerves thence derived, will be relax and lose its tone; "and the golden bowl," the rec tacle of the brain, from which it proceeds, "shall broken." The vessel, by which, as a "pitcher," blood is carried back to the heart for a fresh supp "shall be broken at the fountain, and the wheel," instrument of circulation, which throws it forth ag to the extremities of the body, "shall be broken "the cistern[a]."—When this highly finished piece mechanism shall be thus disjointed and dissolve

[a] See the Portrait of Old Age, in a Paraphrase on the former verses of the twelfth chapter of Ecclesiastes, by Jo Smith, M. D. of the College of Physicians; reprinted in 17 for E. Withers, at the Seven Stars, between the two Tem Gates, Fleet-street.

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"then shall the dust," of which it was framed, "re-
"turn to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall re-
"turn to God who gave it." Learn we, from hence, to bestow on each part of our composition, that proportion of time and attention, which, upon a due consideration of its nature and importance, it shall appear to claim at our hands.

To stamp on man his own image, was the design of God in creating him; to restore that image, when lost, was the design of God in redeeming him. Could greater honour have been done to human nature? Never may the guilt be ours of debasing our nature, and obliterating "this image and superscription;" a species surely of treason against the majesty of heaven. Sloth will obscure the fair impression; its attendants, ignorance and vice, will destroy it. Let diligence, therefore, be appointed to watch over it, and to retouch, from time to time, the lines that are faded; till, the whole standing confessed in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, men may glorify our Father which is in heaven, while they behold his resemblance upon earth. So shall we answer the ends of our creation and redemption, and serve our generation in the most effectual manner. And though, when this is done, we must close our eyes in death, and sleep with our fathers; yet the hour cometh, in which we shall open them again, to "behold thy face, O God, in righteousness; we "shall be satisfied, when we awake with thy like-
"ness[b]."

[b] Psal. xvii. 15.

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Was Adam invested with sovereignty over the creatures? Observe we from hence, that man was made to rule. Majestic in his form, he was ordained to trample upon earth, and aspire to heaven, which, without putting a force upon nature, he cannot but behold and regard. In the original subjection of the creatures, we see what ought to be that of every desire and appetite, terrestrial and animal, to the ruling principle within us. The subtilty of some creatures, and the fierceness of others, now exhibit to us the difficulty of subduing and governing the passions, broken loose, like them, from the dominion of their master; insomuch that the apostle, who asserts that every creature may be, and has been, tamed of man, yet says of one part of man, the tongue, "it is a "deadly evil, which no man can tame," meaning by his own powers. Through the redemption and grace which are by Christ Jesus, this dominion, as well as the other, is restored, not only over our own passions, but over still more formidable opponents, the evil spirits in arms against us. For thus our Lord gave his disciples power not only over the natural "serpents and scorpions," but over some whose venom is of a more malignant and fatal kind; "over "all the power of THE ENEMY." The apostles returned, accordingly, crying out, "Lord, the very "DEVILS are subject unto us, through thy name!" And we have a general promise, that, in our combats with them, God will give us victory, and bruise their leader, Satan himself, under our feet. Our Redeemer is exalted above the heavens; and human nature, in the second Adam, restored to dominion

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over all the earth. And though, at present, the apostle's lot may be ours, to "fight with beasts," with evil men, evil passions, and evil spirits, yet, through God, we shall do great acts; it is he that shall tread down those that rise up against us; till, finally triumphant over the last enemy, and exalted to the eternal throne, we shall view the earth beneath us, and the sun and stars shall be dust under our feet.

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# DISCOURSE II.

## THE GARDEN OF EDEN.

GENESIS, II. 8.

*And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there he put the man whom he had formed.*

In a preceding discourse some considerations were offered, tending to elucidate the particulars related by Moses concerning the origination of man; namely, the time of his formation; the resolution taken by the Deity on the occasion; the materials of which he was composed; the divine image in which he was created; and the dominion over the creatures with which he was invested.

The words now read mark out the history of that habitation in which it pleased the Almighty to place him at the beginning, for the subject of our present inquiries—a subject not only curious but highly interesting. For if Levi be said to have paid tithes to Melchizedek, as being in the loins of Abraham, at the time of that transaction; we may, in like manner, regard ourselves as having taken possession of Eden, being in the loins of our ancestor when he did so. And though it can afford but small comfort, to reflect upon the excellence of an inheritance which we have

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lost, it may inspire into us due sentiments of gratitude and love towards that blessed Person who hath recovered it for us. And thus every consideration which enhances the value of the possession, will proportionably magnify the goodness of our great Benefactor.

For these reasons, we sometimes, perhaps, find ourselves disposed to lament the conciseness and obscurity of that account which Moses hath left us of man's primeval estate in Paradise. But when we recollect, that to this account we owe all the information we have upon so important a point, it will become us to be thankful that we have been told so much, rather than to murmur because we have been told no more; and, instead of lamenting the obscurity of the Mosaic account, to try whether, by diligence and attention, that obscurity may not be, in part, dispelled. For though Moses hath only given us a compendious relation of facts (and facts of the utmost importance may be related in very few words), that relation is ratified and confirmed in the Scriptures of both Testaments, in which are found many references and allusions to it. By bringing these forth to view, and comparing them together, we may possibly be led to some agreeable speculations concerning the situation of Adam in the garden of Eden, the nature of his employment, and the felicity he there experienced.

On a subject so remote, and confessedly difficult, demonstration will not be expected. Much of what is advanced, must be advanced rather as probable than certain; and where there is little positive in-

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formation, the candour so often experienced will accept of such notices as can be obtained by inference and deduction.

When we think of Paradise, we think of it as the seat of delight. The name EDEN authorizes us so to do. It signifies PLEASURE; and the idea of pleasure is inseparable from that of a garden, where man still seeks after lost happiness, and where, perhaps, a good man finds the nearest resemblance of it which this world affords. "What is requisite," exclaims a great and original genius, "to make a wise and a "happy man, but reflection and peace? And both "are the natural growth of a garden. A garden to "the virtuous, is a Paradise still extant; a Paradise "unlost[a]." The culture of a garden, as it was the first employment of man, so it is that to which the most eminent persons in different ages have retired, from the camp and the cabinet, to pass the interval between a life of action and a removal hence. When old Dioclesian was invited from his retreat to resume the purple which he had laid down some years before, "Ah," said he, "could you but see those fruits "and herbs of mine own raising at Salona, you "would never talk to me of empire!" An accomplished statesman of our own country, who spent the latter part of his life in this manner, hath so well described the advantages of it, that it would be injustice to communicate his ideas in any words but his own: "No other sort of abode," says he, "seems "to contribute so much both to the tranquillity of

[a] Dr. Young—Centaur not Fabulous, p. 61.

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"mind and indolence of body. The sweetness of "the air, the pleasantness of the smell, the verdure "of plants, the cleanness and lightness of food, the "exercise of working or walking; but, above all, the "exemption from care and solicitude, seem equally "to favour and improve both contemplation and "health, the enjoyment of sense and imagination, "and thereby the quiet and ease both of body and "mind. A garden has been the inclination of kings, "and the choice of philosophers; the common fa-"vourite of public and private men; the pleasure of "the greatest, and the care of the meanest; an em-"ployment and a possession, for which no man is "too high nor too low. If we believe the Scrip-"tures," concludes he, "we must allow that God "Almighty esteemed the life of man in a garden, the "happiest he could give him; or else he would not "have placed Adam in that of Eden[b]."

The garden of Eden had, doubtless, all the perfection it could receive from the hands of Him, who ordained it to be the mansion of his favourite creature. We may reasonably presume it to have been the earth in miniature, and to have contained specimens of all natural productions, as they appeared, without blemish, in an unfallen world; and these disposed in admirable order, for the purposes intended. And it may be observed, that when, in after times, the penmen of the Scriptures have occasion to describe any remarkable degree of fertility and beauty, of grandeur and magnificence, they refer

[b] Sir William Temple—Garden of Epicurus.

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us to the garden of Eden. "He beheld all the plain "well watered as the garden of the Lord[c]." "The "land was as the garden of Eden before them, but "behind them a desolate wilderness[d]." The prophet Ezekiel, at the command of God, for an admonition to Pharaoh, thus portrays the pride of the Assyrian empire, under the splendid and majestic imagery afforded by vegetation in its most flourishing state: "The Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon, with fair "branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of an "high stature, and his top was among the thick "boughs. The waters made him great, the deep set "him up on high, with her rivers running round "about his plants, and sent out her little rivers to all "the trees in the field. Therefore his height was "exalted above all the trees of the field, and his "boughs were multiplied, and his branches became "long, because of the multitude of waters when he "shot forth.—Thus was he fair in his greatness, and "in the length of his branches; for his root was by "great waters. The cedars in the garden of God "could not hide him, nor was any tree in the garden "of God like unto him in his beauty. I have made "him fair by the multitude of his branches; so that "all the trees of Eden, that were in the garden of "God, envied him[e]." After having related the fall of this towering and extensive empire, the prophet makes the application to the king of Egypt: "To "whom art thou thus like, in glory and greatness, "among the trees of Eden? Yet shalt thou be

[c] Gen. xiii. 10. [d] Joel, ii. 3. [e] Ezek. xxxi. 3, &c.

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"brought down, with the trees of Eden, to the lower "parts of the earth." In another place we find the following ironical address to the king of Tyre, as having attempted to rival the true God, and the glories of his Paradise: "Thou sealest up the sum "full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast "been in Eden, in the garden of God: every pre-"cious stone was thy covering—thou wast upon the "holy mountain of God—thou wast perfect in thy "ways, from the day that thou wast created, until "iniquity was found in thee. Thine heart was lifted "up because of thy beauty; thou hast corrupted thy "wisdom, by reason of thy brightness: I will cast "thee to the ground; I will lay thee before kings, "that they may behold thee[f]."

Traditions and traces of this original garden seem to have gone forth into all the earth; though, as an elegant writer justly observes, "they must be ex-"pected to have grown fainter and fainter in every "transfusion from one people to another. The "Romans probably derived their notion of it, ex-"pressed in the gardens of Flora, from the Greeks, "among whom this idea seems to have been sha-"dowed out under the stories of the gardens of "Alcinous. In Africa they had the gardens of the "Hesperides, and in the east those of Adonis. The "term of *horti Adonidis* was used by the ancients to "signify *gardens of pleasure*, which answers strangely "to the very name of Paradise, or the garden of "Eden[g]." In the writings of the poets, who have

[f] Ezek. xxviii. 12, &c.

[g] Spence's Polymetis, cited in Letters on Mythology, p. 126.

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lavished all the powers of genius and the charms of verse upon the subject, these and the like counterfeit or secondary paradises, the copies of the true, will live and bloom, so long as the world itself shall endure.

It hath been already suggested, that a garden is calculated no less for the improvement of the mind, than for the exercise of the body; and we cannot doubt, but that peculiar care would be taken of that most important end, in the disposition of the garden of Eden.

From the situation and circumstances of Adam, it should not seem probable, that an all-wise and all-gracious Creator would leave him in that state of ignorance in which, since the days of Faustus Socinus, it hath been but too much the fashion to represent him. For may we not argue in some such manner as the following?

If so fair a world was created for the use and satisfaction of his terrestrial part, formed out of the dust, can we imagine that the better part, the immortal spirit from above, the inhabitant of the fleshly tabernacle prepared for it, should be left in a state of destitution and desolation, unprovided with wisdom, its food, its support, and its delight?

If men, since the fall, and labouring under all the disadvantages occasioned by it, have been enabled to make those attainments in knowledge which they certainly have made; and we find the understanding of a Solomon replete with every species of wisdom, human and divine; can we conceive ignorance to have been the characteristic of the first formed father

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of the world, created with all his powers and faculties complete and perfect, and living under the immediate tuition of God?

If upon the trial of Adam, as the head and representative of mankind, their fate, as well as his own, both in time and eternity, was to depend, can we ever think his Maker would expose him to such a trial, with a mind not better informed than that of a child or an idiot?

If redemption restored what was lost by the fall, and the second Adam was a counterpart of the first, must we not conceive Adam to have once been what man is, when restored by grace to "the image of "God in wisdom and holiness?" And does not he, who degrades the character of the *son of God*[h] in Paradise, degrade in proportion the character of that other *Son of God*, and the redemption and restoration which are by him?

Our first father differed from all his descendants in this particular, that he was not to attain the use of his understanding by a gradual process from infancy, but came into being in full stature and vigour of mind as well as body. He found creation likewise in its prime. It was morning with man and the world.

We are not certain with regard to the time allowed him to make his observations upon the different objects with which he found himself surrounded; but it should seem, either that sufficient time was allowed

[h] Luke, iii. 38.—"Which was the son of Adam, which was "the *son of God*."

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him for that end, or that he was enabled, in some extraordinary manner, to pervade their essences, and discover their properties. For we are informed, that God brought the creatures to him, that he might impose upon them suitable names; a work which, in the opinion of Plato[1], must be ascribed to God himself. The use and intent of names is to express the natures of the things named; and in the knowledge of those natures, at the beginning, God, who made them, must have been man's instructor. It is not likely, that, without such an instructor, men could ever have formed a language at all; since it is a task which requires much thought; and the great masters of reason seem to be agreed, that without language we cannot think to any purpose. However that may be, from the original imposition of names by our first parent, we cannot but infer that his knowledge of things natural must have been very eminent and extensive; not inferior, we may suppose, to that of his descendant king Solomon, who "spake of "trees, from the cedar to the hyssop, and of beasts "and fowl, and creeping things, and fishes." It is therefore probable, that Plato asserted no more than the truth, when he asserted, according to the traditions he had gleaned up in Egypt and the East, that the first man was of all men φιλοσοφωτατος, the greatest philosopher.

As man was made for the contemplation of God here, and for the enjoyment of him hereafter, we cannot imagine that his knowledge would terminate

[1] Τα πρωτα ονοματα οι Θεοι ἐδεσαν.—In Cratylo.

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on earth, though it took its rise there. Like the patriarch's ladder, its foot was on earth, but its top, doubtless, reached to heaven. By it the mind ascended from the creatures to the Creator, and descended from the Creator to the creatures. It was the golden chain which connected matter and spirit, preserving a communication between the two worlds.

That God had revealed and made himself known to Adam, appears from the circumstances related; namely, that he took him, and put him into the garden of Eden; that he conversed with him, and communicated a law to be by him observed; that he caused the creatures to come before him, and brought Eve to him. In these transactions, God probably assumed some visible appearance; because, otherwise than by such assumed appearance, no man, while in the body, can see God. And we find, by what passed after the fatal transgression, that "the "*voice* or *sound* of the Lord God walking in the "garden," was a voice or sound to which Adam had been accustomed, though guilt, for the first time, had made him afraid of it.

If there was at the beginning this familiar intercourse between Jehovah and Adam, and he vouchsafed to converse with him, as he afterwards did with Moses, "as a man converseth with his friend," there can be no reasonable doubt but that he instructed him, as far as was necessary, in the knowledge of his Maker, of his own spiritual and immortal part, of the adversary he had to encounter, of the consequences to which disobedience would subject him,



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and of those invisible glories, a participation of which was to be the reward of his obedience.

When God, in after times, selected a peculiar people to be his church and heritage, to receive the law from his mouth, and to be the guardians of his promises, he "chose one place to place his name "there;" to be the place of his residence, where he appeared and was consulted. He gave directions for the construction of a temple or house, in a particular manner appropriated to him, and called his; which, though composed of worldly elements, was so framed, as to exhibit an apt resemblance, model, or pattern, of heavenly things; to serve as a school for instruction, as a sanctuary for devotion. Might not the garden of Eden be a kind of temple or sanctuary, to Adam; a place chosen for the residence and appearance of God; a place designed to represent and give him ideas of heavenly things; a place sacred to contemplation and devotion? Something of this sort seems to be intimated by the account we have of the garden in the second chapter of Genesis, and to be confirmed by the references and allusions to it in other parts of the Scriptures.

With this view, we may observe, that though Paradise was created with the rest of the world, yet we are informed, the hand of God was in a more especial manner employed in preparing this place for the habitation of man. "The Lord God planted a gar-"den eastward in Eden. And out of the ground "the Lord God made to grow every tree that is "pleasant to the sight, and good for food. And a "river went out of Eden, to water the garden; and

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"from thence it was parted, and became into four "heads." Thus the great Architect of the universe, he who, in the language of the apostle, "built all "things," is described as selecting, disposing, and adorning this wonderful and happy spot, wherein was to be placed the creature made after his own image and likeness, but a little lower than the angels. Does not this circumstance suggest to us, that something more was intended than what generally enters into our idea of a garden?

Whenever the garden of Eden is mentioned in the Scriptures, it is called "the garden of God," or "the "garden of the Lord," expressions which denote some peculiar designation of it to sacred purposes, some appropriation to God and his service, as is confessedly the case with many similar phrases; such as "house of God," "altar of God," "man of God," and the like; all implying that the persons and things spoken of were consecrated to him, and set apart for a religious use.

When it is said, "The Lord God took the man, "and put him into the garden of Eden, to DRESS it, "and to KEEP it," the words undoubtedly direct us to conceive of it as a place for the exercise of the body. We readily acquiesce in this, as the truth, but not as the whole truth; it being difficult to imagine, that so noble a creature, the lord of the world, should have no other or higher employment. Much more satisfaction will be found in supposing that our first parents, while thus employed, like the priests under the law while they ministered in the temple, were led to contemplations of a more exalted na-



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ture, "serving to the example and shadow of hea-"venly things." The powers of the body, and the faculties of the mind, might be set to work at the same time, by the same objects. And it is well known, that the words here used[k], do as frequently denote mental as corporeal operations; and under the ideas of DRESSING and KEEPING the sacred garden, may fairly imply the CULTIVATION and OBSERVATION of such religious truths as were pointed out by the external signs and sacraments which Paradise contained.

That some of the objects in Eden were of a sacramental nature, we can hardly doubt, when we read of "the tree of knowledge," and "the tree of life." The fruit of a material tree could not, by any virtue inherent in it, convey "the knowledge of good and "evil," or cause that, by eating it, a man should "live "for ever." But such fruit might be ordained as a sacrament, upon the participation of which, certain spiritual effects should follow. This is entirely conformable to reason; to the nature of man, and of religion.

It is remarkable, that, in the earliest ages, a custom should be found to prevail, both among the people of God and idolaters, of setting apart and consecrating gardens and groves for the purpose of religious worship. Thus Abraham, we are told, "planted a tree, or grove, at Beersheba, and called "on the name of the everlasting God[l]." The worshippers of false gods are described, in the writings

[k] עבד and שמר.

[l] Gen. xxi. 33.

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of the prophets, as "sacrificing in gardens," as "pu-
"rifying themselves in gardens," behind "one tree
"in the midst;" and it is foretold, that they should
be "ashamed for the oaks which they had desired,
"and confounded for the gardens which they had
"chosen[m]." A surprising uniformity in this point,
may be traced through all the different periods of
idolatry, as subsisting among the Canaanites, the
Egyptians, the Greeks, and the Romans. Groves
were dedicated to the gods, and particular species of
trees were sacred to particular deities. The same
usage prevailed among the Druids, in these parts of
the world. And to this day, the aisles of our Gothic
churches and cathedrals are evidently built in imita-
tion of those arched groves, which of old supplied the
place of temples. It is not, therefore, without rea-
son, that the author of a learned dissertation on the
subject makes the following remark:—"These were
"the hallowed fanes of the ancients, in which they
"performed divine worship. And indeed, if we
"would trace up this rite to its origin, we must have
"recourse to the true God himself, who instituted in
"Paradise a sacred garden or grove, ordained Adam
"to be the high-priest of it, and consecrated in it two
"trees, for a public testimony of religion."

But upon the supposition now made, that the gar-
den of Eden served as a kind of temple for our first
parents, might we not expect to find some resem-
blance of it in the tabernacle and temple afterwards
erected, by the appointment of God, for his residence

[m] Isa. lxv. 3. lxvi. 17.

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in the midst of his people Israel? The question is by no means absurd, especially if we recollect that it was the design of the Mosaic sanctuary, with its apparatus, to prefigure the restoration of those spiritual blessings which were forfeited and lost by the transgression in Paradise. Let us, therefore, inquire what satisfaction the Scriptures will afford us upon this point.

The principal objects in the garden of Eden with which revelation has brought us acquainted, are the plantations of trees, and the rivers of water by which those plantations were nourished and supported in glory and beauty. Was there any thing of this sort in or about the tabernacle and temple?

With regard to the plantations, two passages in the Psalms incline us to think there were such in the courts of the Jewish sanctuary, as well as in that of Eden: "I am like a green olive tree in the house of "God[n]. The righteous shall flourish like a palm "tree, he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those "that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall "flourish in the courts of our God. They shall "bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and "flourishing[o]." These texts seem to suppose the real existence of such plantations, and, at the same time, to intimate the end and design of them; namely, to represent the progress and improvement of the faithful in virtue, through the influence of the divine favour. The same pleasing and expressive image is employed to the same purpose, in the first Psalm—

[n] Psal. lii. 8. [o] Psal. xcii. 12, &c.

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"He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of "water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; "his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he "doeth shall prosper."

As to the rivers of water which supplied and refreshed the garden of Eden, and all its productions, we meet with something analogous to them, both in the tabernacle and temple.

During the journey of the children of Israel from Egypt to Canaan, the camp in general, and the sacred tabernacle in particular, were supplied with water in a miraculous manner, not only at the time when Moses smote the rock, but the same supply accompanied them afterwards.—"They drank of that "rock," that is, the water of that rock, "which "followed them." "He led thee," says Moses, "through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein "were fiery serpents and scorpions, and drought, "where there was no water; who made water to "flow for thee out of the rock of flint[p]." And these waters, like those in Eden, were of a sacramental nature. "They did all drink the same spiritual drink; "for they drank of that spiritual rock which followed "them, and that rock was Christ[q]." How lively a representation of that heavenly grace which comforts our weary spirits, and enables us to accomplish our journey through the wilderness of life!

If, from the tabernacle, we proceed to the temple, we are there presented with the sacred streams of Siloah, breaking forth and flowing from the mount of

[p] Deut. viii. 15. [q] 1 Cor. x. 4.

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God. In Ezekiel's famous vision of the new temple, there is a wonderful description, founded on the real situation of things at mount Sion, explaining their signification, and unavoidably carrying our thoughts back to the waters and plantations of the original sanctuary in Eden: "Afterward he brought me again "unto the door of the house, and behold waters "issued out from under the threshold of the house "eastward.—Then said he to me, These waters "issue out toward the east country, and go down "into the desert, and go into the sea, which being "brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be "healed. And it shall come to pass, that every "thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the "river shall come, shall live.—And by the river "upon the bank thereof, on this side, and on that "side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall "not fade; neither shall the fruit thereof be con-"sumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to "its months, because their waters issued out of the "sanctuary; and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, "and the leaves thereof for medicine[r]."

When the prophets have occasion to foretel the great and marvellous change to be effected in the moral world under the evangelical dispensation, they frequently borrow their ideas and expressions from the history of that garden, in which innocence and felicity once dwelt together, and which they represent as again springing up and blooming in the wilderness. Of the many passages which occur, two

[r] Ezek. xlvii. 1, &c.

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or three only shall be recited. "The Lord will com-
"fort Sion, he will comfort all her waste places;
"he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her
"desert like the garden of the Lord: joy and glad-
"ness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the
"voice of melody[s];" such joy and gladness, such thanksgiving and melody, at the restitution of all things, as were at their first creation, when "God
"saw every thing he had made, and behold, it was
"very good;"—when "the morning stars sang to-
"gether, and all the sons of God shouted for joy."
—"When the poor and needy seek water, and there
"is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the
"Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not
"forsake them. I will open rivers in high places,
"and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will
"make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry
"land springs of water. I will plant in the wilder-
"ness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle,
"and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir
"tree, and the pine, and the box tree together: that
"they may see, and know, and consider, and under-
"stand together, that the hand of the Lord hath
"done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created
"it[t]." "The wilderness and the solitary place
"shall be glad for them: and the desert shall re-
"joice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom
"abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing;
"the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the
"excellency of Carmel and Sharon: they shall see

[s] Isa. li. 3. [t] Isa. xli. 17, &c.

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"the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our "God[u]."

At the time appointed, these predictions received their accomplishment. Men "saw the glory of the "Lord, and the excellency of our God." By the death and resurrection of the Redeemer, lost Paradise was regained; and its inestimable blessings, wisdom, righteousness and holiness, are now to be found and enjoyed in the Christian church. But as men are still men, and not angels, those blessings are still represented and conveyed by sacramental symbols, analogous to the original ones in Eden. From the sacred font flows the water of life, to purify, to refresh, to comfort; "a river goes out of Eden, to "water the garden," and to "baptize all nations;" while the eucharist answers to the fruits of the tree of life: at the holy table, we may now "put forth our "hands, and take, and eat, and live for ever."

Let us go one step farther, and consider the state of things in the *heavenly* kingdom of our Lord. There, it is true, all figures and shadows, symbols and sacraments, shall be no more, because faith will there be lost in vision, and we shall "know even as "we are known." But in the mean time, till we attain that perfect consummation, was any person admitted to a sight of heaven and the wonders that are therein, he could no otherwise describe them to us, who are yet in the body, than by the way of picture and similitude. This was the case of St. Paul. In a divine ecstasy, he had been caught up,

[u] Isa. xxxv. 1, 2.

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and made to see and hear things, which he could not impart to others on account of their incapacity to receive them. What then does he? He refers us to the habitation of our first parents for a general and comparative idea of them. "I knew a man," says he, "who was caught up into Paradise." Our Lord, giving the penitent thief to understand, that his sorrows would soon be at an end, and he should pass with his Saviour into a place of rest and joy, uses the same expressions, "This day shalt thou be with "me in Paradise." The beloved disciple, who was frequently, in the spirit, translated to those celestial mansions which Christ is gone to prepare for us, gives a more particular and extended description of them. But how? By bringing to our view all Eden, its waters and plantations, together with those seen by Ezekiel in his vision of the new temple. "He "showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as "crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and "of the Lamb.—And of either side of the river was "there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of "fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; and the "leaves of the tree were for the healing of the na-"tions. To him that overcometh will I give to eat "of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Pa-"radise of God. Blessed are they that do his com-"mandments, that they may have right to the tree "of life. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. "And let him that heareth say, Come. And let "him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, "let him take the waters of life freely." In these passages the divine scenery is evidently borrowed

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from objects once really existing in the terrestrial Paradise, and employed to aid our conceptions in apprehending celestial glories. If, therefore, we are taught that heaven resembles the garden of Eden, it seems fair and reasonable to conclude, that the garden of Eden resembled heaven, and was, from the beginning, intended so to do; that, like the temple under the law, and the church under the Gospel, it was, to its happy possessors, a place chosen for the residence of God; a place designed to represent and furnish them with ideas of heavenly things; a place sacred to contemplation and devotion; in one word, that it was the primitive temple and church, formed and consecrated for the use of man in a state of innocence. There, undisturbed by care, and as yet unassailed by temptation, all his faculties perfect, and his appetites in subjection, he walked with God, as a man walketh with his friend, and enjoyed communion with heaven, though his abode was upon earth. He studied the works of God, as they came fresh from the hands of the Work-master, and in the creation, as in a glass, he was taught to behold the glories of the Creator. Trained in the school of Eden, by the material elements of a visible world, to the knowledge of one that is immaterial and invisible, he found himself excited by the beauty of the picture, to aspire after the transcendent excellence of the divine original. This sacred garden, the first Adam, by transgression lost; but all the blessings signified and represented by it, have been, through the second Adam, restored to his posterity. In our stead, he subjected himself to the vengeance of "the flaming

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"sword," and regained for us an entrance into Eden. For "when he overcame the sharpness of death, he "opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers." He is himself "the Tree of Life in the midst of the "Paradise of God;" and, by the effusion of his Spirit, he gives us to drink "rivers of living water." In his church here below, he has all along communicated, and still communicates, his gifts, by external sacraments, which serve at once for signs, as means, and as pledges: but, admitted to the church above, we shall see and taste them as they are. "Thou," O Lord Jesus, "shalt show us," for thou only canst now show us "the path of LIFE," the "way to the "tree of life," and introduce us to the truth and substance of all that was shadowed out by the blissful scenes of Eden; for "in thy presence is the fulness "of JOY, and at thy right hand there are PLEASURES "for evermore."

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# DISCOURSE III.

## THE TREE OF LIFE.

GENESIS, II.—Part of Verse 9.

*The tree of life also in the midst of the garden.*

SOME arguments were offered upon a former occasion, tending to prove that the garden of Eden, laid out and planted by the hand of the Almighty, for the habitation of our first parents in a state of innocence and felicity, was of a figurative and sacramental nature; that, like the temple under the law, and the church under the Gospel, it was, to its happy possessors, a place chosen for the residence of God; a place designed to represent and furnish them with ideas of heavenly things; a place sacred to contemplation and devotion.

Among the objects presented to us, there is one, which, though then taken into the general account with the rest, may seem to claim a more particular attention. It stands conspicuous in the Mosaic description, the capital figure in that beautiful piece. It is said to have been placed in the centre of Eden, like the sun of the little system, and bears a name sufficiently calculated to awaken curiosity. The inspired historian having informed us, that "the Lord

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"God caused to grow out of the ground every tree "that was pleasant to the sight, and good for food;" every thing in the vegetable way either useful or ornamental, adds—"The tree of life also in the midst "of the garden."

Life, we know, as it relates to man, is twofold; that of the body and that of the soul; animal and spiritual; temporal and eternal. Each requires to be supported by a nutriment adapted to its nature, and supplied by something external to itself. The food of the body is, like the body, material, and cometh out of the earth; the food of the soul is, like the soul, spiritual, and cometh down from heaven. The tree of life was, doubtless, a material tree, producing material fruit, proper, as such, for the nourishment of the body. The question will be, whether it was intended to be eaten, in common for that end alone; or whether it was not rather set apart, to be partaken of, at a certain time or times, as a symbol or sacrament of that celestial principle which nourishes the soul unto immortality; meaning, by that term, not a natural immortality, or bare existence, but that divine, spiritual, eternal life, which was lost by the fall, and the restitution of which is now "the "gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

If it be supposed that the tree of life was designed solely for the support of the body of man, there will appear no reason for its being distinguished, as it is, by its appellation, from the other trees of the garden, which were all, in that sense, equally *trees of life*, being, as we are told, "good for food." And, indeed, the matter seems to be clearly determined

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otherwise, by the twenty-second verse of the third chapter, where we find fallen man excluded from Paradise, "lest he should put forth his hand, and "take also of the fruit of the tree of life, and eat and "live FOR EVER[a]." Immortality, therefore, was to have been obtained, according to God's original appointment, by eating the fruit of the tree of life; not, surely, as the Jews idly talk, by any medicinal quality or virtue, preserving the eater from sickness and death, neither of which, by the way, was in the world, till introduced by sin. No; the thing speaks itself. A material tree could only confer eternal life as a divinely instituted symbol or sacrament; as "an "outward visible sign of an inward spiritual grace, "given to Adam, as a means whereby he was to re-"ceive the same, and a pledge to assure him there-"of." Hereby he would be continually reminded of the truth communicated to him, without all doubt, from the beginning; that there was another and a better life than that led by him in the terrestrial and figurative Paradise; a life on which he was to set his affections, and to which he was to look as the end, the reward, the crown of his obedience; a life supported, as it was given, by emanation from that Being who only hath life in himself, and is the fountain from which, in various ways, it flows to all his creatures. Of Him, as the glorious sun of the intellectual world, and of his gracious gift, streaming, like light through the heavens, to enliven and bless the spiritual system, the tree of life, with its fruit, in the

[a] לעולם.

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midst of Eden, is apprehended to have been ordained as an instructive and comfortable symbol; that so a memorial of his abundant goodness might be shown upon earth, and new created man might sing of his righteousness.

The sacramental designation of the tree of life in Paradise, may be farther evinced, perhaps, by a passage or two in the book of St. John's Revelation. "To him that overcometh," says the Captain of our salvation, "will I give to eat of the tree of life, "which is in the midst of the Paradise of God[b]." And again—"Blessed are they that do his command-"ments, that they may have right to the tree of "life[c]." By "eating of the tree of life in the Para-"dise of God," is here evidently meant a participation of eternal life with God in heaven. Of this eternal life, the faithful followers of their great Leader are to be put in possession, as the reward of their labours, when those labours shall have been accomplished; when they shall have walked to the end of their journey in the path of Christ's commandments, and shall have finally overcome their spiritual enemies. May we not, therefore, by parity of reason, infer from hence the signification and intent of the tree of life in Eden? By means of that sacrament, had Adam gone happily through his probation, and persevered in obedience unto the end, he would have been admitted, in the kingdom of heaven, to that state of eternal life with God for which he was always designed, and of which Paradise was the

[b] Rev. ii. 7. [c] Rev. xxii. 14.



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earthly resemblance. He would have been removed from the shadows of this world to the realities of a better. His removal must have differed in the manner of it, from that in which we now live, or ought to live, in expectation. Without sin, death could have had no power over him. He would have been translated alive, as Enoch and Elijah, for particular purposes, afterwards were. The change would have been wrought in him at once, as it was in them, and as it will be in those who shall be found alive at the coming of our Lord to judgement.

When transgression had subjected Adam to a sentence of condemnation, the case was altered. Glory and immortality could no longer be obtained upon the terms of the first covenant, now broken and void. The very attempt became criminal. Man was to be put under a new covenant, and in a new course of trial. He was to suffer in the flesh for sin, and to pay the penalty of death. But, through the merits of a surety, that death was to be made the gate of immortality. By faith he was to acquire, upon the mediatorial plan, a fresh right or power to eat of the tree of life, and live for ever, after the resurrection from the dead, with his propitiated and reconciled Maker. In mercy, therefore, he was excluded from the garden of Eden, and from the original symbol of that eternal life, which was now to be sought after by other means, and represented by other sacraments. He was sent forth into the world, to pass his time in toil, pain, and sorrow; in mourning, contrition, and penance; till death should set him free, and introduce him to the joys purchased and pre-

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pared for him by that blessed Person, "in whom is "life, and the life is the light of men[d]." The same divine Person was always the source of immortality, however the sacred symbols, instituted to adumbrate it, have been varied under different dispensations. To our first parents, before the fall, he stood in the relation of Creator and Lord. To them, and to their posterity, since that sad catastrophe, he hath stood, and ever continueth to stand, in the new relation of Saviour and Redeemer. The man who doth not now acknowledge him in this latter character, will find him, in the former, an avenger to execute wrath: and what wrath can be so fierce and terrible as that of the Lamb? It is oil set on fire. The sinner, unless he be in love with condemnation, must not revert to the first covenant, and aim at the acquisition of eternal life on the foot of the law of works, or the performance of unsinning obedience. In this case the rebel claims promotion instead of suing for pardon. He puts forth his hand to the fruit of the now forbidden tree, which is no longer food for man. Its nature is changed with our condition. To the eye of human pride it still looks fair and tempting; but its contents, when eaten, are ashes and sulphur; and immortality, without redemption, would prove the reverse of a blessing.

Such being the state of this matter, and the order of the divine economy concerning it, all that is said in the Scriptures from the fall downward, with regard to the new method of obtaining eternal life, and the

[d] John, i. 4.



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appointed means of so doing, will throw light backward, and serve to illustrate the account already given of the tree of life in Paradise.

To this end may be adduced the texts which speak of the Redeemer, his religion, truth, grace, and salvation, under the very original expression of the tree of life.

And here, the first place is due to that charming description, left us by king Solomon in the Proverbs, of divine WISDOM personified, and represented as having been with God in the beginning, yet rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, and delighting to be with the sons of men; as the way, the light, and the life, the author and giver of peace and comfort, joy and gladness; the Creator of all things, by whom the worlds were made, and without whom was not any thing made that was made.—"Happy," says the great teacher of Israel, "happy is the man that "findeth Wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than "the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof "than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies; "and all the things thou canst desire are not to be "compared unto her. Length of days is in her right "hand, and in her left hand riches and honour. Her "ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths "are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay "hold upon her, and happy is every one that retaineth her [e]."

Thus, in another place: "The fruit of the right-

[e] Prov. iii. 13, &c.

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"eous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls "is wise[f]." The fruit produced by the righteous, through grace, copious, fair, and well flavoured, like that which once grew upon the tree of life, invites all beholders to come and partake, with its owner, of that glory and immortality with which it shall one day be crowned. And surely he, who, by these means, winneth souls by righteousness and salvation, is wise indeed! He resembles the Eternal Wisdom, the Son of God himself, who came down from heaven to win souls, when the fruit of the righteous was the true tree of life.

Again—"A wholesome or healing tongue is a "tree of life; but perverseness therein is a breach "of the spirit[g]."

If this be so in what passes about the affairs of the present world, how much more, when the concerns of another make the subject of conversation! When we extend the proverb to them, we cannot but think of the two capital instances in which it was most signally verified. We detest the tongue that "perverted" mankind from the path of life, and made a "breach in the spirit," at which sin entered, and death by sin. But everlasting benediction be upon that tongue which spake, as no other ever did or could speak, pardon, peace, and comfort to lost mankind. That was the tree of life, whose leaves were for the *healing* of the nations. "With the "*tongue* confession is made unto *salvation*."

Once more: "Hope deferred maketh the heart

[f] Prov. xi. 30. [g] Prov. xv. 4.

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"sick; but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of "life[h]." This likewise is true, in temporals, of any object long wished for, and at last possessed; but it is emphatically so of the hope of salvation, which, while it is deferred, maketh the heart sick; as we may find by the pathetic and forcible exclamations of those who waited for it in old time. But when the desire, that is, the object of the desire—he whom so many prophets and kings had earnestly desired to see—he who was the "desire of all nations"—when he came, he proved the tree of life restored in the Paradise of God.

Two remarkable representations of things spiritual and divine, under the Gospel dispensation, or in the kingdom of heaven, were exhibited to Ezekiel and St. John. Let us compare them with each other, and both of them with the original scenery in Paradise, from which the images are evidently borrowed, and to which unless they are again referred, they lose half their beauty and significancy.

In Ezekiel's vision of the Christian church, under the figure of the second temple, he tells us, he saw "waters issuing from the sanctuary, and giving uni-"versal life, wherever they went[i]." St. John saw "a river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding "from the throne of God and the Lamb[k]." And "a river" we know, "went forth" at the beginning, to water and make glad the garden of God in Eden.

"On the banks of the river, on this side, and on

[h] Prov. xiii. 12. [i] Ezek. xlvii. 1—9. [k] Rev. xxii. 1.

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"that side," Ezekiel beheld "very many trees;" or, as it should, perhaps, be rendered, "a very great "tree[l]," "whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the "fruit thereof be consumed: it" (in the singular number) "shall bring forth new fruit according to "its months; and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, "and the leaves for medicine[m]." Let us now turn again to St. John—"In the midst of the street of "it"—the new Jerusalem, succeeding in the place of Paradise, and the old Jerusalem with its temple and services—"in the midst of the street of it, and "of either side the river, was there the tree of life, "which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded its "fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were "for the healing of the nations[n]." Can we read either of these descriptions, without immediately carrying our thoughts back to Eden, where we see growing out of the ground, at the command of the Lord God, "every tree good for food, and pleasant "to the sight; the tree of life also in the midst of "the garden?"

But let us take a view of some other figures and sacraments, ordained since the fall of man, as the tree of life was appointed before it, to represent to the faithful the blessing of immortality.

The lost blessing was to be recovered and restored to the human race by the sufferings and death of a surety, who, after dying for our sins, was to rise again for our justification. The grand institution, therefore, of this kind, commencing immediately upon

[l] עץ רב מאד. [m] Ezek. xlvii. 12. [n] Rev. xxii. 2.

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the fall, and continuing in force to the death and resurrection of Christ, was sacrifice. A victim was brought to the altar, and being slain as a substitute for the offerer, first saved him from death, and then became food to support his life. And as Providence hath been ever careful to furnish us with continual mementos of the truths most important and interesting to us, it seems to be a circumstance worthy notice, that since the use of animals for food, and those chiefly which were made choice of in sacrifice, the world subsisteth by shedding of blood, and the death of the innocent is daily the life of the guilty. This is an additional reason why every meal should be "sanctified," according to the apostolical direction, "by the word of God, and by prayer[o]," while the meat that perisheth reminds us, in so lively and striking a manner, of that which endureth unto eternal life. The history of the paschal lamb, with the preservation of Israel from the hand of the destroyer, in that night to be remembered through all their generations, the night of their leaving Egypt, is a very particular, full, and beautiful exemplification of the nature and design of sacrifice. "Christ, our "passover, is sacrificed for us;" and, therefore, we too "keep the feast[p]."

That miraculous supply of food, vouchsafed by God to sustain his people during their journey through the wilderness, till they came to the borders of Canaan, was another sign or symbol of immortal life, and its support derived from above. This new

[o] 1 Tim. iv. 5. [p] 1 Cor. v. 7.

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and extraordinary viand sprung not out of the earth, but came down, in rain or dew, from heaven, white to the eye, sweet to the taste, and agreeable to every palate; given freely to all; proportioned to the necessities of each; and renewed day by day, till the sojournings of Israel were over, and the promised rest attained. St. Paul, having occasion to speak of those events, which, as he expresses it, "happened "unto Israel for ensamples[q]," as figures or shadows of things spiritual and divine, mentions this miracle, with that of the water brought out of the rock, in the following terms: "They all did eat the same spi-"ritual meat; they did all drink the same spiritual "drink; for they drank of that spiritual rock which "followed them; and that rock was Christ[r]." Our Lord, in the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel, discoursing with the Jews upon this subject, says to them—"Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; "but my Father giveth you the TRUE bread from "heaven. For the bread of God is he that cometh "down from heaven, and giveth life unto the "world[s]." Christ here styleth himself the TRUE bread, plainly in opposition to that which was shadowy and figurative. He is the TRUE bread, which cometh down from heaven, and is given, day by day, to nourish and support the Israel of God, the camp of the saints, the church militant, during *her* pilgrimage in the world, till she shall come to the promised inheritance, the land of that everlasting rest, which remaineth for the people of God. There we shall find,

[q] Τυποι συνεβαινον. [r] 1 Cor. x. 3, 4. [s] John, vi. 32, 33.

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and enjoy for ever, the truth and substance of this sacred figure. "He that hath an ear, let him hear "what the Spirit saith to the churches. To him that "overcometh will I give to eat of the HIDDEN "MANNA[t]," that is, to partake of that "life," which is "hid with Christ in God;" as the golden vessel of manna was laid up for a memorial, in "the holy "places made with hands[u]."

To the same purpose served that bread, called the *shew bread*, or *bread of the presence*[v], set forth new every morning, in the tabernacle and temple, and denoting the sustenance to be communicated to the souls of men from the body of the Messiah; to prefigure which body, it is well known, that both tabernacle and temple were constructed under the direction of God himself.

Lastly—What the tree of life was to Adam in Paradise; what sacrifice in general was to the faithful, after the fall, from Abel downward; what the paschal lamb was to Israel quitting Egypt; what manna was to that people in the wilderness; what the shew bread was in the tabernacle and temple; all this, and if there be any other symbol of like import, it is now briefly comprehended, during the continuance of the Christian church upon earth, in the holy eucharist. The former were prefigurative sacraments, this is a commemorative one. They showed forth the Messiah, and the life which is by him, until his first coming; this shows forth the

[t] Rev. ii. 17. [u] Exod. xvi. 33; Heb. ix. 4.
[v] לחם פנים.

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same Messiah, and the same life, "until his coming "again." Excluded from the tree of life in Paradise, we are admitted to partake of the bread of life in the church. Lost by the covenant of works, we are saved by that of grace. A cheering voice calls to us from the sanctuary, "Draw near with faith, and take "this holy sacrament to your comfort." The elements are honoured with the names of the body and blood of Christ, because appointed to signify and convey, to the worthy communicant, the blessings purchased by his body broken, and his blood shed, upon the cross; blessings to the soul, like the benefits conferred upon the body by bread and wine; life, health, strength, comfort, and joy.

Such have been the different symbols and sacraments vouchsafed to mankind under different dispensations, all representing and shadowing out a glorious immortality in another and better world, where we shall sit down with the Author and Giver of it, at his table, to eat bread, and drink of the fruit of the vine, new in his kingdom; where we shall give glory to the Lamb that was slain; where we shall partake of the hidden manna, and eat the fruit of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.

From the passages of Scripture thus laid together, the nature and design of the tree of life in Eden seem sufficiently clear. And, upon a review of what hath been said, it is impossible not to admire the consistency and uniformity running through both Testaments, from the second chapter of the Genesis of Moses, to the twenty-second of St. John's Revela-

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tion, which so mutually illustrate and explain each other. The analogy of faith, in this instance, proclaims aloud the wisdom and harmony of the divine dispensations, from the creation to the consummation of all things.

At sundry times, in divers manners, and by various instruments, hath Heaven conveyed instruction to man. But the instruction conveyed, with the terms and figures employed to convey it, bespeak, at all times, the hand of the same omniscient and beneficent Author. They must be construed and expounded upon the same plan; and, when rightly construed and expounded, will be found to terminate in the same awful and interesting objects, eternal life, and the means of its attainment. To these great ends serve the symbols of Paradise, the sacrifices of the patriarchs, the types of the law, the visions of the prophets, and the sacraments of the Gospel, with the numberless expressions and descriptions borrowed from them, and referring to them. These constitute a kind of *sacred language*, peculiar to holy writ, and only explicable by it. The knowledge of this language is a science by itself, and the study of it well worthy the attention of such as have leisure and abilities to prosecute it, its own rich and exceeding great reward. The subjects are of such infinite moment, that all others must, in comparison, appear to be as nothing. And the dress in which they are presented to us, is the most ornamental and engaging in the world. It is of that kind to which both eloquence and poetry, among men, owe all their charms.

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The doctrines of Scripture are not proposed in a naked logical form, but arrayed in the most beautiful and striking images which the creation affords[x].

A celebrated and well-known author, whose essays have long been the established standard of true taste and fine writing, makes, in one of them, the following observations—"By similitudes drawn from the "visible parts of nature, a truth in the understand-"ing is, as it were, reflected by the imagination: we "are able to see something like colour and shape in "a notion, and to discover a scheme of thoughts "traced out upon matter. And here the mind re-"ceives a great deal of satisfaction, and has two of "its faculties gratified at the same time, while the "fancy is busy in copying after the understanding, "and transcribing ideas out of the intellectual world "into the material. It is this talent of affecting the "imagination that gives an embellishment to good "sense, and makes one man's compositions more "agreeable than another's. It has something in it "like creation, and bestows a kind of existence. It "makes additions to nature, and gives greater variety "to God's works. In a word, it is able to beautify "and adorn the most illustrious scenes in the uni-"verse, and to fill the mind with more glorious shews "and apparitions than can be found in any part of "it[y]."

Perhaps it is impossible any where to meet with juster sentiments than these are, clothed in more apt

[x] See Lord Bacon's Advancement of Learning, b. vi. c. 3.

[y] Mr. Addison's concluding paper on the Pleasures of the Imagination. Spectator, vi. No. 421.

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and elegant expressions. And this single passage would have sufficed to establish the reputation so justly acquired by its author. The inference I would beg leave to make from it is this: if such be the case in human compositions, where similitudes are drawn by short-sighted man, to illustrate things temporal; what must it be, when they are drawn to illustrate things eternal, by Him who has a perfect knowledge of the nature and properties of the objects from whence they are drawn, as well as of those to which they are applied; nay, who doubtless created the visible world, among other purposes, for that to which he himself, in his revelations to mankind, has so continually employed it, that of serving as a picture, or representation, of the world at present invisible? "Eye hath not seen," says an apostle, "nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart "of man to conceive the things that God hath pre-"pared for them that love him. But God hath re-"vealed them unto us by his Spirit[z];" and the Spirit, knowing our infirmities, and whereof we are made, hath revealed them, from the beginning, by external signs, symbols, sacraments, and a figurative language, supplied by them. Upon this very principle it is, that another acknowledged master of style and composition, grounds the character of the sacred writings, considered in that view—"Eloquence," says he "is that which persuades: it persuades by "moving; it moves by things and palpable ideas "only: and hence no eloquence is so perfect as that

[z] 1 Cor. ii. 9.

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"of the Scriptures; since the most spiritual and "metaphysical things are there represented by sensi-"ble and lively images[a]."

In justification of this remark, let the appeal, in the instance now before us, be made to every one endued with sensibility. The position to be laid down is, that, through the alone merits of the Redeemer, we now inherit eternal life. Is it possible for all the art of man to convey this truth in terms so pleasing and informing, as those few used by St. John, with allusion to the scenery in Eden?—"And he shewed "me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, "proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the "Lamb. And in the midst of the street of the new "Jerusalem, and on either side of the river, was "there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of "fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; and the "leaves of the tree were for the healing of the na-"tions."—

To whom, then, blessed Lord Jesus, should we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. Thou art the true tree of life, in the midst of the Paradise of God. For us men, and for our salvation, thou didst

[a] Rollin, Belles Lettres, ii. 360.—"To quarrel with our Maker "about this way of proceeding, would be to blame him for con-"veying truths to us in the most affecting and agreeable manner; "or for creating us with those faculties which are fitted to receive "truths thus conveyed. For the most important truths, as we are "framed at present, can make but a slight impression on the "mind, unless they enter first, like a picture, into the imagination, "and from thence are stamped on the memory." Peters, Crit. Diss. on the Book of Job, part i. sect. 10.

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condescend to be planted, in a lowly form, upon the earth. But thy head soon reached to heaven, and thy branches to the ends of the earth. Thy head is crowned with glory, and thy branches are the branches of honour and grace. Medicinal are thy leaves to heal every malady, and thy fruits are all the blessings of immortality. It is our hope, our support, our comfort, and all our joy, to reflect, that, wearied with the labours, and worn out with the cares and sorrows of a fallen world, we shall sit down under thy shadow with great delight, and thy fruit shall be sweet to our taste!

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# DISCOURSE IV.

## THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE.

GENESIS, II. 17.

*Of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat.*

THIS is the first and the only law recorded to have been promulged in the state of man's innocence. It may, therefore, be reasonably supposed to have contained in itself the substance of many other laws. Its comprehension may be inferred likewise from its importance. The transgression of it occasioned the fall of the human race, and introduced the necessity of a redemption by the Son of God.

Could we ascertain with precision what is intended by *the knowledge of good and evil*, such a discovery might possibly furnish us with a key to this part of Scripture, and to the transactions relative to the trial of our first parents in Paradise. Let us, therefore, begin with an inquiry into the true meaning of these words.

By the knowledge of good and evil, the generality of commentators understand *experimental* knowledge; and they suppose the name to have been given to the tree by a *prolepsis*, because, in the event, through



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man's transgression, it was to become the means of his attaining the experimental knowledge of evil; thus purchasing to himself a knowledge of good, manifested and illustrated by comparison with its opposite; as a person is then said to understand the nature and value of health, when he has been deprived of it by sickness.

That such was the effect of the transgression is certain: but it is not, perhaps, so certain that this is the right interpretation of the phrase, which is by no means peculiar to this place, but occurs in other parts of the Sacred Writings, where it cannot be taken in the sense assigned. Nay, there are two passages even in the third chapter of Genesis itself, which do not admit of such exposition. The tempter assures the woman, that, on eating the fruit, they should be as gods, "knowing good and evil." And the Almighty afterwards says, "Man is become like "one of us, *knowing good and evil.*" Now the knowledge of good and evil possessed by the Deity cannot possibly be that produced by the experimental knowledge of evil. Let us examine into the usage of the words elsewhere.

In Deuteronomy we read—"Moreover your little "ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your "children, which in that day had no *knowledge of* "*good and evil*, they shall go in thither[a]." Here, to know good and evil, is evidently, to know the nature of both, and so to form a judgement upon that knowledge, as to choose the one, and refuse the

[a] Deut. i. 39.

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other. Thus, again, the same sentiment is expressed in the well-known passage of Isaiah, "Before the "child shall know to *refuse the evil and choose the* "*good*[b]." And again, the woman of Tekoah says to David, "As an angel of God, so is my lord the king "to *discern good and bad*[c]," that is, to distinguish, judge, and act accordingly. This last passage is similar to those before cited from Genesis, and must explain them; namely, "Ye shall be as gods, know-"ing good and evil;" and, "Man is become like "one of us, to know good and evil." It may be added, that a New Testament writer uses the words in the same sense. For the apostle, speaking of adults in Christianity, as opposed to babes in the faith, styles them such as have their "senses exer-"cised to *discern good and evil*[d]."

Such being the plain and acknowledged import of the expression in other parts of Scriptures, why should we suppose it to be different in the instance before us? Let us rather conclude it to be the same.

The question then will be, how could this tree in the garden of Eden confer a knowledge of good and evil? How could it enable man to discern the nature of each? How could it inform him which was to be pursued, and which to be avoided?

Shall we say, with the Jewish writers, that there was any virtue in the fruit, to clarify the understanding, and so to teach man knowledge? But if so, why was it prohibited? For the knowledge, which we

[b] Isa. vii. 16. [c] 2 Sam. xiv. 17. [d] Heb. v. 14.



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suppose to be implied in the phrase, is perfective of man's nature; it is true wisdom: and if he really acquired it by tasting the forbidden fruit, he was much benefited by transgression. We must, therefore, determine, that the tree was designed to teach the knowledge of good and evil, or to be productive of true wisdom, not in a physical, but in a moral way. It instructed our first parents to fly from, and avoid, death, and the cause of death, which must have been in some manner denoted by this tree; as they were directed to choose life, and the cause of life, signified to them by the other tree, which bore that appellation.

The prohibition, being calculated for man's trial, was at the same time calculated to give him the information necessary for that purpose. Such is the nature and design of every law. It conveys the knowledge of good and evil, by prohibiting the latter, and consequently enjoining the former. "By the "law," says St. Paul, "is the knowledge of sin. I "had not known lust except the law had said, Thou "shalt not covet[e]." It is the law, in every case respectively, which gives the knowledge of good and evil. Obedience to it is good, and the reward is life; disobedience is evil, and the penalty death. And the trial of man, thus informed, is, whether he will obey or disobey, in order to the manifestation of the lawgiver's justice, wisdom, power, and glory, by rewarding or punishing him, as he does the one or the other. The difficulty lies here: why an action to appear-

[e] Romans, vii. 7.

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ance so unimportant and insignificant as that of eating, or forbearing to eat, the fruit of a tree, should have been appointed as the test of his obedience?

To solve this difficulty, let it be considered, that, beside those laws usually termed *moral*, and supposed to speak their own fitness and propriety, from an obvious view of the nature and constitution of things, it is not strange nor uncommon for God to try the love and obedience of man by other precepts, styled *positive* and *ceremonial*. Such was the order for Abraham to quit his country and kindred, and afterward to offer his son Isaac: upon which latter occasion, notwithstanding the proofs before given by him of an obedient spirit, God was pleased to say, "Now I know thou fearest God[f]." Such were the ritual observances regarding sacrificature, and other particulars observed among the patriarchs, and afterwards, with additions, republished in form by Moses. Such are the injunctions to abstinence and self-denial, with the institutions of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, among Christians. What hath been thus done under every other dispensation, was done likewise in Paradise.

And as touching the same precepts called *positive*, even they are not, what they are sometimes deemed to be, arbitrary precepts, given for no other reason, but because it is the will of God to give them. They carry in them a reason, which, though it may not be discoverable unless revealed, is yet nevertheless founded on the state of human nature, its relation to

[f] Gen. xxii. 12.

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God, and its various wants, at different times, and in different situations. The observation, indeed, made by an eminent casuist[5] with respect to human laws, holds much stronger with respect to laws divine: "The obedience of that man is much too delicate, "who insists upon knowing the reasons of all laws "before he will obey them. The legislator must be "supposed to have given his sanction from the rea-"son of the thing; but where we cannot discover the "reason of it, the sanction is to be the only reason "of our obedience." This observation, I say, is most certainly a just one. But as a wise God acts not without the highest reason, so a gracious God, in his dispensations to his reasonable creatures, has, in many instances, with his commands, communicated the reasons on which they were founded, and has even condescended to argue with his people, on the justice and rectitude of his proceedings.

Services outward and visible have been enjoined. They have always been enjoined. But then they have always been symbolical of dispositions and actions inward and spiritual. When this is the case, from unimportant and insignificant, they become the most important and significant transactions in the world. An uninformed person, living in the times of persecution under the Heathen emperors, must have been, to the last degree, astonished and confounded, when told, that a Christian was in danger of eternal rejection from the presence of God, if he scattered a handful of incense on the fire; and that

[5] Bishop Taylor.

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he was bound, by his religion, rather to die in torments, than submit to do it. But every objection vanishes in a moment, when we know that such an action, in a Christian so circumstanced, was a token of renouncing his God and Saviour, and acknowledging a false object of worship.

To come a little nearer to the point in question.—Know we not, that the action of *eating*, in particular, from the beginning, both among believers and unbelievers, has ever been esteemed and constituted an action symbolical of religious affection; and that, in the days of St. Paul, a man denominated himself either one or the other, as he partook of the Lord's table, or the table of an idol? What were these, in the new Paradise, the church Christian, but the tree of life, and the tree of death? Why should it seem incredible, or absurd, that, in man's original trial, the same action should have been, in some manner, significative of the same affection? And if, in that truly golden age of innocence, health, and felicity, the food allotted to man was of the vegetable kind, then the fruit of a *tree* must, of course, be the subject of the prohibition. In after ages, under the law of Moses and the permission of animal food, the figurative system of rites was artificial and sanguinary; but in the sacred grove of Eden, that first tabernacle or temple, planted for a place of worship as well as of abode, the whole of the religious scenery was composed of the beautiful and luxuriant productions of primeval nature, unstained with blood, when as yet there was no malediction upon the ground.

This consideration satisfies the mind, and removes

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every objection made to the nature of the test, and the wisdom of God in appointing it. For if in this, as in other dispensations, the action of eating was intended to be symbolical of some mental disposition or affection, whether we can now ascertain particulars, or not, all the buffoonery of infidelity falls to the ground at once. The trial of Adam, like that of every other man, was, whether he would so far believe in God, as to look for happiness in obedience to the divine command; or would seek that happiness elsewhere, and apply for it to some forbidden object, of which the tree must have been an emblematical representation.

You will ask, what that object was, and what information, as to the knowledge of good and evil, Adam could receive from the prohibition? By answering the last question, a way may, in some measure, perhaps, be opened, for an answer to the first.

A due contemplation of the prohibition might naturally suggest to the mind of our first parent the following important truths; especially if we consider (as we must and ought to consider) that to him, under the tuition of his Maker, all things necessary were explained and made clear, how obscure soever they may appear to us, forming a judgement of them from a very concise narrative, couched in figurative language, at this distance of time.

Looking upon the tree of knowledge, then, and recollecting the precept of which it was the subject, Adam might learn that God was the sovereign Lord of all things; that the dominion vested in man over

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the creatures, was by no means a dominion absolute and independent; that without and beside God, there was no true and real good: that to desire any thing without and beside him, was evil: that no temporal worldly good, however fair and tempting its appearance, was to be fixed upon by man, as the source of his felicity: that the sole rule for shunning or desiring things sensible, should be the will and word of God; and that good and evil should be judged of by that standard alone: that the obedience which God would accept, must be paid with all the powers and affections of the mind, showing itself careful and prompt in every the least instance: that man was not yet placed in a state of consummate and established bliss; but that such state was by him to be earnestly expected, and incessantly desired; and that he must take the way to it, marked and pointed out by God himself[h].

These particulars seem to flow from the prohibition in an easy and natural train. And they lead us to answer the other question, namely, what was the object represented by the tree of knowledge? It was that object, on which man is prone to set his affections, instead of placing them on a better; it was that object, which, in every age, has been the great rival of the Almighty in the human heart; it was that object, which, in one way or other, has always been "worshipped and served rather than the Creator;"

[h] See Vitringa, *Observat. Sacr.* vol. ii. lib. iv. cap. 12, from whom many of the sentiments in this Discourse are borrowed.

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it was the CREATURE, the WORLD; and the grand trial was, as it ever hath been, and ever will be, till the world shall cease to exist, whether things visible or things invisible should obtain the preference; whether man should walk "by sight, or by faith." To know this, was the knowledge of good and evil; and this knowledge came by the law of God, which said, "Thou shalt not covet[1]." Man's wisdom consisted in the observation of that law; but an enemy persuaded him to seek wisdom by transgressing it. He did so; and had nothing left, but to repent of his folly: a case that happens, among his descendants, every day, and every hour.

Let us, therefore, consider the tree of knowledge, in this light, with respect to its nature, situation, design, qualities, effects, and the knowledge conferred by it.

The fruit of this tree was to appearance, fair and pleasant; but, when tasted, it became, by the divine appointment, the cause of death. Now, what is it, which, in the eyes of all mankind, seems equally pleasing and alluring, but the end thereof, when coveted in opposition to the divine command, proves to be death? It is the world, with its pleasures and its glories, desired by its votaries, *per fas atque nefas*, to the denial of God, and to their own destruction. The Scriptures proclaim this aloud, and the experience of all generations confirms their testimony. Indeed, what is there in the universe but the Cre-

[1] Ουκ επιθυμησεις.

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ator and the creature? And between whom, but them, can the contest subsist, for the love and obedience of man?

The tree of knowledge was situated in the midst of the garden, as was the tree of life. They stood near together, but they stood in opposition. The divine dispensations are always best illustrated by each other. Under the Gospel, Jesus Christ is the tree of life. What is it that opposes him, and, notwithstanding all that he has done, and suffered, and commanded, and promised, and threatened, is continually, by its solicitations, being ever present and at hand, seducing men into the path of death? Scripture and experience again join in assuring us, that it is the world. When we are in the house of God, which is Eden restored, engaged in hearing his word, and in the exercises of devotion, we sit down, as it were under the shadow of the tree of life. No sooner are we gone from it, and too often even while we are there, the world intrudes, and draws off to other subjects our thoughts and our affections. What saith Moses under the law? "Behold I set before "you, this day, life and death, good and evil; "choose ye[k]." Are not these the two trees of Paradise? But imagination cannot form to itself a more exquisite and affecting piece of scenery upon this subject than that exhibited by king Solomon in the book of Proverbs; a book whose end and design is to teach us the true knowledge of good and evil, that we may pursue the one and avoid the other.

[k] Deut. xxx. 15.

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In his seventh chapter, under the usual figure of a harlot, loosely decked in a profusion of vain ornaments, he introduces the world, or the false wisdom thereof, by its several fictitious charms and meretricious blandishments, alluring the unwary to the chambers of destruction. In the succeeding chapter, by way of perfect contrast, appears, in the beauty and majesty of holiness, the offspring of the Almighty, the Son of the Father, the true and eternal Wisdom of God, with all the tender love and affectionate concern of a parent, inviting men to the substantial joys and unfading pleasures of immortality, in the house of salvation. Again, we are presented with the tree of death and the tree of life. From Solomon let us pass to St. Paul. "To be carnally "minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is "life. If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if "ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the "body, ye shall live[1]." Behold once more the trees of death and life. Such, in good truth, is the face of things every where offering itself to view; such is the contest incessantly carrying on in this present world, which, on the one hand, entices the children of Adam, by giving themselves up to its enjoyments, to taste the tree of death: while the Redeemer, on the other, still continues to cry aloud by his word, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the "tree of life."

The tree of knowledge was designed to be the test of Adam's obedience, the subject-matter of his trial.

[1] Rom. viii. 6, 13.

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The world, with its desirable objects, is the test of our obedience, the subject-matter of our trial, whether we will make it our chief good, or prefer the promise of God to it. Thus the trial of Abraham was, whether he would quit his country and kindred, and yield up his only son in obedience to the divine command, trusting to a recompense in reversion. The trial of Job was whether he would still serve God, when deprived of his possessions, his family, and his health. After this sort was our Lord Jesus Christ himself proved by the most powerful incitements of the human passions. Of the tree of knowledge Satan tempted him to put forth his hand, and take and eat, that the second Adam might be tried after the example of the first. The disciples also are tried in like manner with their blessed Master. They are instructed to renounce the world, and to deny themselves: which is only the original prohibition in other words: "Of the tree of the know-" ledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat."

The apparent qualities of the forbidden tree are represented to have been these: It seemed "good " for food, and fair to the sight, and a tree to be de-" sired to make one wise." It is remarkable, that St. John, laying before us an inventory of the world, and all that is in it, employs a division entirely similar; "Love not the world," says he, "neither the " things that are in the world. If any man love the " world, the love of the Father is not in him. For " all that is in the world, the desire of the flesh, and " the desire of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not " of the Father, but is of the world. And the world

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"passeth away, and the desire thereof; but he that "doeth the will of God abideth for ever[m]." Here is a picture of the fatal tree, full blown, with all its temptations about it, drawn, by the pencil of truth, in its original and proper colours. The expressions tally, to the minutest degree of exactness. The "desire of the flesh" answers to "good for food," the "desire of the eyes" is parallel with "fair to the "sight;" and the "pride of life" corresponds with "a tree to be desired to make one wise." The opposition between this tree and the other is strongly marked. "If any man love the world, the love of "the Father is not in him." And we are informed, that one leads to death, the other to life. "The "world passeth away, and the desire thereof; but "he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." Precisely conformable, in every circumstance, was the threefold temptation of the second Adam. He was tempted to convert stones into bread for food, to satisfy "the desires of the flesh;" he was tempted with the kingdoms of the world, and the glories of them, to satisfy "the desire of the eyes;" he was tempted to work a miracle on the pinnacle of the temple, and to show himself moving aloft through the air in the sight of the multitude, to display "the "pride of life." He repelled the tempter, as our first parents should have done, and as we their children should do now, instead of judging according to appearances, by a firm and resolute appeal to the revelation of God.

[m] 1 John, ii. 15.

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Thus, whether we consider the tree of knowledge as to its nature, its situation, its design, or its qualities, it seems to have been a very apt and significant emblem of the creature, or the world, with its delights and its glories, the objects opposed in every age to God and his word. To reject the allurements of the former, and obey the dictates of the latter, is the knowledge of good and evil, and the true wisdom of man. So that the forbidden tree in Paradise, when the divine intentions concerning it are explained from other parts of Scripture, teaches the important lesson more than once inculcated by Solomon, and which was likewise the result of holy Job's inquiries: "Behold, the fear of the Lord, that "is WISDOM; and to DEPART FROM EVIL IS UN-"DERSTANDING."

Whoever shall attentively reflect on the evidence which has been produced, and duly consider the perfect coincidence and harmony of the Scriptures and dispensations of God upon the subject, will, perhaps, be convinced, that, in the main, we must have fixed upon the true exposition of "the know-"ledge of good and evil," and the nature of man's original trial. There is a doubt, or difficulty, which offers itself, and may seem to require a solution. It is this. We all know, as the state of human affairs is at present, by what manner, and by what temptations, the world solicits our desires after objects forbidden: but what temptation, you will say could it hold forth to our first parents, existing alone, invested with sovereignty over it, and possessed of all its pleasures and its glories in the garden of Eden?

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This question will, perhaps, be best answered by asking one or two more. What temptation, then, let it be asked, could the world present to the people of God, when placed in the land of promise, and blessed with every species of temporal felicity? What temptation can the world present to a pious Christian, placed by Providence in a state of affluence, and furnished with every good that his heart can wish for? The truth is, that the world, even supposing it to have been lawfully attained, and to be in ever so good hands, has *this* power of temptation; it may engage the attention of the human mind, and attract to itself the affections of the human heart, till, by degrees, its Maker is forsaken and forgotten. It may induce a man to consider it as an abode, and no longer to desire a removal to higher and better things with God above. "Beware," says Moses, "lest when thou hast eaten, and art full, thine heart "be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God[n]." This proved to be the case of the Israelites. It is the temptation too often fatal both to nations and individuals, when indulged by Heaven with success and prosperity. And if the world, obscured as its brightness has been by the fall, can and does now produce such an effect on the wisest of those that are not at any time favoured with a large share of it, how much more must it have been able to charm and to deceive, when first formed in perfect beauty! Considering this circumstance, and withal, how "the "creature," in the earliest ages, "was worshipped

[n] Deut. viii. 14.

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"and served instead of the Creator," one is almost ready to think it possible, that idolatry itself might take its beginning in Eden.

From the sad experience of those who have gone before us, let us learn to have recourse to the law of God, for our *knowledge of good and evil*, and to refrain from the fruit of the forbidden tree, the tree of death. Of this fruit, though proceeding from the same root, there have been different kinds put forth and exhibited in different periods of time, agreeable to the turn and temper of each. In the days of the patriarchs, and of the Israelites, it was the worship of the material elements, or powers of nature, in the place of Him who made them, accompanied with every kind of impurity. Such was the religion of the revolted nations, and such the rites with which it was celebrated. Yet such a religion, and such rites, the people of God, for many ages, notwithstanding all that he did for them and said to them, strange as it may appear to us at present, were ever ready to adopt and embrace. They apostatized to idolatry, with the divine glory blazing before their eyes on the top of Sinai. Nor could the wisest and greatest of their princes afterwards escape the contagion. This corruption, which the Babylonish captivity, like a well-applied caustic, served to eat out and to do away, was succeeded by a disease of another kind, but one that stuck to them till it destroyed them; a mistake as to the nature of their economy; a confidence in externals; a deep hypocrisy; a spirit wholly secularized; an ambition to have all the kingdoms of the world subject to Jerusalem, and the



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wealth and glory of them centred there. "The de-
"sire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the
"pride of life," were chosen in opposition to the celestial fruits of love and obedience, humility and charity, faith and holiness, produced among them by Jesus Christ, the tree of immortality. They "put
"forth the hand, and tasted." But soon the exterminating angel dispossessed them of their Paradise, and they died the death.

Since the ascension of Christ, the Heathen world has been converted to the Gospel, and that desert has become the garden of the Lord. But in this garden, also, is there no tree of death? no specious fruit held forth to entice the unwise to perdition? What is the doctrine, which, in some parts of Christendom, gives adoration to beings that are not God; or that, which, in others, denies it to Him who is so? What is the scheme that asserts the non-necessity of a divine revelation, claiming to man the right, and attributing to him the power, of making a religion for himself, and prescribing to his Maker the terms of his own acceptance? What is the atheistical policy, which excludes the Creator from the care of his works, and his providence from the kingdoms of the earth? What is that system of Paganism, revived under the name and notion of *philosophy*, as opposed to Christianity, and every thing that is called religion, by which either the Deity is materialized, or matter deified? What is that unbounded licentiousness in principles and manners, daily growing more and more into vogue, and shamelessly, by some of the new philosophers, defended in form? What is

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the luxury, the splendour, the extravagance, the dissipation, the abandoned profligacy, and ungodliness of the age?

Behold the flourishing state of the fatal tree! View the extent of its branches, and the abundance of its fruit, in these latter days! But remember, that, still —the end is death; to a nation, excision; to individuals, without repentance and faith, destruction everlasting from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he shall descend into his garden to make inquisition, and call offenders to their final account. Be not ye, therefore, deceived and seduced, however the temptation may seem "fair to "the sight, and good for food;" however "desirable" it may be represented "to make you wise." Take your direction, through life, from the word of God, and be not prevailed upon to falsify and transgress it. The conflict may be sharp, but it will be soon over; bear up resolutely under it; and, for your consolation and encouragement in the hour of trial, when strongly solicited to taste the tree of death, listen to that strength-conferring voice, which crieth from the eternal throne, in words that will bear a repetition—"To him that overcometh will I give to "eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the "Paradise of God."



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# DISCOURSE V.

## THE PRINCE OF PEACE.

ZECHARIAH, IX. 9, 10.

*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the Heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even unto sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.*

THIS prophecy was delivered by Zechariah, five hundred years before the advent of Christ. And St. Matthew, in the Gospel appointed for this day, affirmeth it to have had its accomplishment when our Lord entered Jerusalem, in the manner here described, amidst the acclamations of the attending multitude: "All this was done, that it might be ful-"filled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, "Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold thy King "cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, "and a colt the foal of an ass." The prediction is

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of the literal kind, and it was literally and most exactly fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. No other king, with these characteristic marks about him, ever thus came to Sion before him; and since the Jews rejected him, they have lost their temple, their city, and their country; nor has there been any Sion to which their king might come. Jerusalem would not rejoice on the day when the prophet had enjoined her to rejoice, and therefore she hath cause to mourn from that day to this. The rulers of Sion were vexed and chagrined at beholding a scene which would have excited them to shout aloud for joy. The disciples, indeed, exulted, and sang Hosannah to the Son of David. Could Messiah enter his capital unacknowledged? That was impossible. Had men been silent upon this occasion, the buildings and pavements of the city must have supplied the defect, and bore their attestation to the promised and long-expected King of Israel. "I tell you," replied our Lord to the Pharisees, who desired him to rebuke his disciples—"I tell you, that if these should hold "their peace, the stones would immediately cry "out."

That we may perceive the full force and beauty of the prophecy before us, it will be necessary to show its connexion with the preceding part of the chapter wherein it stands.

In this ninth chapter of his prophecy, Zechariah denounceth some of the divine judgements, which were executed by that scourge of heaven, Alexander the Great, when he overran Syria, took Damascus, burnt Tyre, destroyed Gaza, and, in imitation of his

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favourite hero, dragged the governor thereof at his chariot wheels. "The burden of the word of the "Lord in the land of Hadrach, and Damascus shall "be the rest thereof.—And Hamath also shall bor-"der thereby; Tyrus, and Sidon, though it be very "wise. And Tyrus did build herself a strong hold, "and heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as "the mire of the streets. Behold, the Lord will cast "her out, and he will smite her power in the sea, "and she shall be devoured with fire. Askelon shall "see it, and fear; Gaza also shall see it, and shall "be sorrowful; and Ekron, for her expectation, "shall be ashamed, and the king shall perish from "Gaza, and Askelon shall not be inhabited." The prophet next foretelleth the mixture and incorporation of the Philistines, when thus humbled by Alexander, with their old enemies the Jews: "And a "bastard," or an alien generation (αλλογενεις, say the LXX.) "shall dwell in Ashdod; and I will cut off "the pride of the Philistines; and I will take away "his blood out of his mouth, and his abominations "from between his teeth; but he that remaineth, "even he shall be for our God, and he shall be as a "governor in Judah and Ekron as a Jebusite." Amidst these revolutions and alterations of affairs in the world, God promiseth, in the next verse, to preserve his temple, while so many castles and strong holds about Jerusalem were overturned, so many cities swept of their inhabitants by the besom of destruction: "And I will encamp about mine house, "because of the army, because of him that passeth "by, and because of him that returneth: and no

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"oppressor shall pass through them any more; for "now have I seen with mine eyes." Then followeth the prophecy in my text—"Rejoice greatly, O "daughter of Sion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; "behold, thy King cometh unto thee; he is just, "and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an "ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. And I will cut "off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from "Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off; and "he shall speak peace unto the Heathen; and his "dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from "the river to the ends of the earth." As if the prophet had spoken in more words to Jerusalem thus—"Thine eyes, in the generations following, shall be-"hold the flourishing pride of sundry nations, each "endeavouring to overtop others in height of glory "and temporal state; each striving to keep others "under, by human policy, or strength of war. And "whilst the sight of their mutual conquests shall "possess thy thoughts, thou wilt be ready, in the "pride of thine heart, to say, Jerusalem and Judah "one day shall have their turn, and in that day shall "the sons of Jacob, the seed of Abraham and Da-"vid, be like the monarchs of Greece and Persia, "far exalted above the kings of other nations; every "one able to bear arms, glistering with his golden "shield, and leading the princes of the Heathen, as "prisoners, bound in chains, and their nobles in "fetters of iron. The beauty and riches of their "costly temples shall deck the chariots of my child-"ren, which their captives shall draw in triumph. "But thou shouldest remember, that the promised

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"Prince of peace, of benignity, and justice, should "not be sought among the tumultuous hosts of war: "nor canst thou hope that He, who is the Desire of "all nations, should be thy Leader or General, to "destroy those nations. It is glory and honour "enough for thee, glory and honour greater than the "greatest conqueror on earth could ever compass, "that the King of kings and Lord of lords shall be "anointed and proclaimed King upon the hill of "Sion: that the inviolable decrees of everlasting "justice shall be given to all the nations under "heaven from thy courts. And, therefore, while "horses and chariots, and other glorious prepara-"tions of war, shall present themselves to thy view, "suffer them to pass as they come; and rest as-"sured, that thy King, of whose coming thou hast "often been admonished by the prophets, is not "among them. The manner of his coming to thee, "so thou wilt mark it, bodes far better tidings to "thee, and all the nations besides, than can accom-"pany the prosperous success of wars, or any vic-"tory stained with blood. What king of Judah or "Israel did ever levy an army, though in just de-"fence of their country and people, on so fair terms, "that no poor amongst them were pinched with "taxes for the supply? What victory did they ever "obtain so cheap, that many of their children were "not forced to sit down with loss, many wounded, "others maimed, and some always slain? But, lo, "now I bring thee unusual matter of exultation and "joy. For, behold, thy King cometh unto thee, "whensoever he cometh, attended with justice for

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"his guide, and salvation for his train. He shall "execute judgement without oppression: he shall "save thee, so thou wilt be saved, without destroy-"ing any, being able to make thy lame to go, to "give life to thy dead, without hazard either of life "or limb to any that rests within thy territories. "Such shall be the manner of his coming, and such "his presence, that the poorest wretch among thy "children may think himself more happy than any "king of Judah or Israel which was before him, so "he will but conform himself to the temper and de-"meanour of his Saviour. For he cometh unto "thee, poor and lowly, riding upon an ass, to wean "thee from the vain hopes of the Heathen, from "which the prophets have so often dehorted thy "forefathers. Some put their trust in horses, and "some in chariots; but thy confidence must be in "the Lord thy God, who will always be thy King, "to defend thee, to protect thee, to strengthen thee "through this weakness[a]."

Having thus taken a general view of the prophecy, proceed we to make some observations and reflections upon the several parts of it, in the order in which they lie.

Beautiful and striking is the manner in which it is introduced. The prophet doth not coldly inform Jerusalem, that her King should come to her, and that, when he did come, she ought to rejoice. Rapt into future times, he seems to have been present at the glorious scene. Standing upon mount Olivet,

[a] Dr. Jackson—vol. ii. p. 845.

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he hears the hosannas of the disciples, and beholds the procession approach towards the gates of Jerusalem: he turns himself to the city, and breaks forth in transport, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion; "shout, O daughter of Jerusalem!" Religion, then, hath its joys; a prophet calleth us to exult and shout; and often as this holy season returneth, the church secondeth his call. Her services dispel the gloom of melancholy, and put gladness into the hearts of all her children. They are wonderfully calculated to renew good impressions in our minds, to increase our faith, to invigorate our hope, to blow up the sacred fires of devotion and charity, and to fill us with holy and heavenly tempers. They produce a joy "which no man taketh from us," and in which "a stranger intermeddleth not:" they inspire a pleasure which no pain can overcome, of which no time can deprive us, and which death will perfect and ensure to us for ever. Perverse Jerusalem rejected joy, and chose sorrow for her portion. Glad tidings came to the Gentiles, and were gladly received. The Christian church, formed of them, is now the daughter of Sion, and the new Jerusalem. To her the promises are transferred and made good. She therefore obeyeth the prophet's injunctions; she continually, with the holy Virgin, "magnifieth "the Lord, and her spirit rejoiceth in God her "Saviour."

The next words of our prophet assign the reason why Jerusalem was called upon to rejoice, namely, the approach of her King: "Behold thy King "cometh unto thee." A person was to visit Jeru-

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salem, who should deserve to be emphatically styled "her King." The nations had their kings and conquerors, their Nebuchadnezzars and Cyruses, their Alexanders and Cæsars; these appeared, in their turns, upon the stage, contending for the empire of the world. Each performed the part assigned him by an all-directing Providence, and then vanished away. Sion beheld all these changes, and still survived the commotions occasioned by them. The prophets had promised her a King, who should overcome her enemies and triumph gloriously; who should erect, in the time of the fourth great monarchy, an universal and everlasting kingdom, and give laws to the world; nay, who should govern all things in heaven and earth. At the time predicted, not only Jerusalem looked for a completion of the prophecies, but the whole earth sat still, expecting that Judea should give her a king. And, lo, the promised King of the Jews is born of the royal house and lineage of David. All the circumstances of his birth, the words of his mouth, and the actions of his life, demonstrate him to be the Messiah, foretold by the prophets from the beginning of the world. He cometh to his own, and Jerusalem is commanded to rejoice and shout; but his own receive him not, and Jerusalem turns a deaf ear to the voices of all her prophets, not suffering herself to believe that any thing said by them could refer to Jesus of Nazareth. Her heart was depraved and hardened: she demanded to be put in possession of the empire of this world; she despised the appearance of her King,

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with the acclamations of an ignoble multitude, and soon nailed a SPIRITUAL monarch to the cross.

With how different sensations are the members of the Christian church affected when they hear the words of Zechariah, "Behold, thy King cometh "unto thee," and read the history of their accomplishment in the Gospel for this day! With inexpressible delight we carry back our thoughts to that happy æra, when the King of the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, made his appearance in the flesh. We join his train, we attend him in his progress towards Jerusalem, and seem to enter with him into the holy city, while "the multitude of those who go before, "and those who follow after, cry, Hosanna to the "Son of David; blessed is he who cometh in the "name of the Lord." When we behold this scene, as presented to our view at this season, we are taught to conceive by it a noble idea of Messiah, at his first advent, ushered into the church as her Lord and King, the prophets going before, and the apostles following after him, all proclaiming and bearing testimony to Jesus, all singing Hosanna to the Son of David, all pronouncing the blessedness of him who thus cometh in the name of Jehovah. We know that this is He to whom all the prophets give witness, and that he hath fulfilled those things which were written of him. We know that he hath overcome our enemies, and triumphed gloriously; that he hath erected an universal and everlasting kingdom, and given laws to the world; nay, that he doth govern all things in heaven and earth. Of the man-

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ner in which he achieved his victories, and of the nature and extent of his kingdom, we shall have occasion to speak, as we proceed to consider the character which our prophet hath drawn of this King of Israel: "He is just, and having salvation; lowly, "and riding on an ass."

Righteousness, Salvation, and Humility, distinguish the person and reign of Messiah. Righteousness leads the way. "He is just" or righteous. St. Stephen, in his apology to the Jews, affirmeth the prophets to have foreshown the coming of Jesus under the title of the Just One. "Which of the pro-"phets have not your fathers persecuted? And they "have slain them which showed before of the com-"ing of the Just One; of whom ye have been now "the betrayers and murderers[b]." David in spirit thus addresseth King Messiah, as we are assured by St. Paul's application of the passage in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "Thy throne, "O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of right-"eousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast "loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore "God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the "oil of gladness above thy fellows[c]." Jeremiah describeth him as righteous himself, and as making others so: "The days come, saith Jehovah, that I "will raise unto David a righteous Branch: and a "King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute "judgement and justice in the earth. And this is "his name whereby he shall be called, JEHOVAH

[b] Acts, vii. 52. [c] Psal. xlv. 6.

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"OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS[d]." And, indeed, we seldom find the kingdom of Christ mentioned, but righteousness is immediately mentioned as the first-fruits of it. Righteousness, the Astræa of the ancients, left the earth at the fall of Adam, and returned again to visit and to bless it, at the birth of Christ. He was conceived without stain, lived without sin, and died without guilt. He conversed in the world, yet contracted none of its pollution, but, like his glorious emblem the light, passed through all things undefiled. His bitterest enemies, Jews and Gentiles, joined to attest his uprightness. "Have thou nothing to do "with that just man[e]," said the wife of Pilate. Pilate himself, upon the strictest examination, declared, "I find no fault in this man[f]." Judas, who had every possible opportunity of knowing the character of his master, cried out, in an agony of despair, "I "have betrayed the innocent blood[g];" and the Roman centurion, who watched at the cross, gave in his evidence, "Certainly, this was a righteous man[h]." The kingdom which he came to establish was a kingdom of righteousness. He called men from the ways of sin by his sermons, he allured them from its pleasures by his example, he cleansed them from its guilt by his blood, and rescued them from its power by his Spirit. Where the Gospel came, idolatry gave place to true piety; every holy and amiable temper was planted and flourished in the hearts of the regenerate;

[d] Jer. xxiii. 5.
[e] Matth. xxvii. 19.
[f] Luke, xxiii. 4.
[g] Matth. xxvii. 4.
[h] Luke, xxiii. 47.

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and to be a Christian, was to be every thing that was honest, and just, and good. Thus did Jesus of Nazareth answer his title of "the Just One," and evince himself to be the true "Melchisedek," or "King of "Righteousness." The Jews chose not to be the subjects of such a King, and declared, they "would not "have this man to reign over them." Therefore the kingdom of God was taken from them, and given to a people bringing forth the fruits thereof. Be it our care, while we celebrate the advent of our King, not to forget this part of his character; and let us rest assured, that if we would be his subjects, as well as pass for such, and share the blessings of his reign, as well as talk of them, we must be like him. His subjects are his *children;* and none will be finally owned by him as such, who bear not impressed upon them the similitude of their *Father*.

Salvation is the next sign and token which Zechariah hath given us, whereby to know the King of Zion: "He is just, and having salvation." He was to execute that part of the regal office, which consisteth in rescuing the people from their oppressors. Whoever reads the history of Israel, finds it contain an account of many saviours, raised up, at sundry times, for this purpose. Such were Moses, Barak, Gideon, Samson, and many more in the ages after them. But no one of these was "He that should "come." They, like the legal priests, were not "suffered to continue, by reason of death;" the church was still taught to "look for another" and a more glorious Saviour, in the latter days; the prophecies were full of the great salvation which he

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should effect; so great, that, in comparison of it, former deliverances were not to be mentioned, unless as shadows and faint resemblances of that grand and complete one. At the time appointed, Jesus of Nazareth appeared in this character, and brought his credentials with him, the authenticity of which was fairly allowed by a master in Israel: "No man can "do these miracles that thou doest, except God were "with him." At the birth of Christ, an herald from heaven proclaimed him to the shepherds by this style and title: "Behold, I bring you good tidings of "great joy, which shall be to all people; for unto "you is born this day, in the city of David, a Sa-"viour." And if tidings of salvation are not tidings of joy, what tidings can be such? The greater the salvation, the greater ought to be the joy. And what is the deliverance of a single people from a temporal adversary, when compared with the salvation of the whole world from the oppression of the spiritual enemy; from sin, and sickness, and sorrow, and pain, and death, and hell? This was the salvation which Jesus undertook to effect; and his miracles declared him equal to the mighty task. He forgave sin, he healed sickness, he dispelled sorrow, he removed pain, he raised the dead, he cast out devils. Had not the prophet reason to cry out, "Re-"joice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daugh-"ter of Jerusalem; behold, thy King, behold, thy "righteous Saviour cometh unto thee!" But the daughter of Zion would have shut her gates against this righteous Saviour; the daughter of Jerusalem renounced her part and portion in such salvation.

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She had set her heart upon being great in this world, whereas Christ came to make her so in another. And whenever Christians shall resemble Jews in the turn of their affections, whenever they shall regard religion only as a means of aggrandizing themselves upon earth, in their hearts they will entertain the same notion of the salvation of Jesus, and the same contempt for it, that the Jews did. But let the sufferings of Jerusalem warn us, that we share not in her guilt, lest we share also in her punishment, and come into the same condemnation. We acknowledge for our Saviour the person whom Israel rejected. Let us not mistake the nature of his salvation. "He "shall be called JESUS," saith the angel to his holy mother, "for he shall *save* his people from their "SINS[1]."

As the salvation to be wrought by King Messiah was to be so different from that wrought by all other kings and conquerors, different likewise was to be his appearance and demeanour: "Behold, thy "King cometh unto thee; he is just, and having "salvation; lowly, and riding on an ass." This is demonstration against the Jews, that how great soever, in the end, the external glory of Messiah is to be (and neither they nor we can set that too high), yet he was once to visit his people in great humility; he was to appear at his first advent, in a state of humiliation. The nature of his undertaking required it, and their own law and prophets are clear and express upon the subject. Though God, he was to become

[1] Matt. i. 21.



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man: "A virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, "and they shall call his name Immanuel, which is, "being interpreted, God with us[k]." He was to be "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;" "a man without form or comeliness[l]," without the glare of outward splendour to recommend him; "his "visage," on the contrary, by suffering affliction, was to be "marred more than any man, and his form "more than the sons of men[m]." He was to keep the law, and to die for sin: "Sacrifice and offering "thou wouldest not—burnt offering and sin of-"fering hast thou not required. Then said I, "Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is "written of me; I delight to do thy will, O "my God; yea, thy law is within my heart[n]." "He "made his soul an offering for sin; he was cut off "out of the land of the living; he made his grave "with the rich[o]." If words can render any thing plain, it is plain from these passages, that Messiah was to be an humble and a suffering character. The types and the prophecies are as positive for his humiliation, as they are for his exaltation; nor could any one person accomplish them all, without being equally remarkable for lowliness and meekness, glory and honour. The modern Jews, sensible of this, have framed to themselves two Messiahs; one, Ben Joseph, of the tribe of Ephraim, designed to be poor and contemptible, and to undergo indignities; the other, Ben David, of the tribe of Judah, who is to

[k] Isa. vii. 14.; Matt. i. 23. [l] Isa. liii. [m] Isa. lii. 14.
[n] Psal. xl. 6.; Heb. x. 5. [o] Isa. liii.

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be victorious, to conquer all the earth before them, and to live for ever in temporal grandeur. This idle dream, contrary to the tenour of the whole Old Testament, and unknown to their expositors before Christ came, shows us, that blindness hath happened to Israel, not for want of light, but because they have shut their eyes against it till they cannot now open them to behold the brightness of its shining, to view Jesus of Nazareth as the end of their law, and the accomplishment of their prophecies. To an unprejudiced person, acquainted with that law and those prophecies, the sight of the lowly Jesus entering Jerusalem in great humility, and in still greater, bowing his head and expiring on mount Calvary, is a no less striking evidence of his being the Messiah, than his glorious resurrection from the dead, and triumphant ascension into heaven. The Scriptures must needs be fulfilled, in one respect, as well as the other. Thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and thus it behoved him to humble himself, in order to his suffering. Through pride Adam fell, and therefore by lowliness must Christ be exalted. "An haughty spirit goeth "before a fall; but before honour is humility[p]."

In this state of meekness and lowliness, was Christ to gain a complete victory over the enemies of man's salvation. The warfare was new, and it is no wonder that the weapons employed in it should be uncommon. Other warriors prepare their horses and their chariots, their bows, their spears, and their shields. But Messiah disarms his followers, in

[p] Prov. xviii. 12.



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order that they may overcome. For thus our prophet goes on; "And I will cut off the chariot from "Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the "battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak "peace unto the Heathen." Could a plainer declaration have been made, that the conquests of Messiah were not to be of a secular nature; that his kingdom was not of this world? "If my kingdom were of "this world," saith he himself, "then would my "servants fight[q]." But, lo, he taketh from them the weapons of war. Was there a shield or sword seen among the thousands of the Israel of God? No shield, but that of faith; no sword, but that of the Spirit. Like their great Leader, they encountered their adversaries with patience, and overcame by suffering. So far was the advent of Christ from carrying with it any appearance of war, that the nations at the time lay hushed in the tranquillity of an universal peace. "He spake peace to the Heathen," as well as to his own people the Jews. The waves of this troublesome world ceased to toss themselves, and a delightful calm seemed to forebode the approach of those halcyon days, when the Prince of Peace should make his abode amongst us; like the stillness of that hallowed night, on which the angelic choir descended, to sing "Peace on earth;" peace with God, by the pardon of sin; peace with ourselves, by the answer of a clear consience; peace with one another, by mutual charity. O divine peace, how lovely and how pleasant dost thou appear! How happy and

[q] John, xviii. 36.

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heavenly is the kingdom of Messiah, where thou art to be found! Who would not wish to see, who would not labour to promote, the full accomplishment of the last clause of the prophecy we have been considering, in the extension of this kingdom and dominion of Christ "from sea to sea, and from the river to the "ends of the earth;" that so all the nations of the world might remember themselves, and turn to the Lord Jesus, as many did at the first preaching of his Gospel! And let the daughter of Zion lead the way, restored to her pre-eminence among the churches. We will not envy her the honour, as she formerly envied us Gentiles, but rather rejoice and shout with her, in the day when she shall be led to acknowledge her King; the King of Righteousness, Salvation, and Peace; the once lowly, but now highly exalted, Jesus of Nazareth; who, as at this time, came to visit us in great humility, and shall come again, at the appointed hour, to judge the world; when we shall behold him, glorious as Jerusalem herself can wish, riding upon the heavens in power and majesty unutterable, amidst the acclamations of saints and angels.

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# DISCOURSE VI.

## THE KING OF GLORY.

REVELATION, 1. 7.

*Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.*

IT is the peculiar supputation of the Christian church, as a pious writer well observes, to begin the year, and to commence the annual course of her services, at this time of Advent, herein differing from all other accounts of time whatsoever. The reason of which seems plainly to be this, because in the numbering her days and measuring her seasons, she does not so much regard the sun in the firmament, as the great Sun of Righteousness, her Lord and Saviour who is in heaven. She considers herself as "redeemed from the earth;" and therefore no longer confined to calculations of the world, or obliged to direct herself by the courses of the material luminaries. It is her employment to make known to her children the time of salvation, called in Scripture, "the year of the redeemed;" and this year was introduced by the everlasting day-spring from

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on high visiting her; whereby she became, what the Spirit styles her, in the Revelation, "a city that has "no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine "in it, for the Lord God and the Lamb are the light "and glory thereof."

The lessons and services, therefore, for the first four Sundays in her liturgical year, propose to our meditations the twofold advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, teaching us that it was he who was to come, and did come, to redeem the world; and that it is he, also, who shall come again to be our judge. These two advents involve in them, and comprehend between them, the whole counsel of God for the redemption of mankind, by the coming of Christ in the flesh, with the final issue of that counsel in respect of each individual, to be manifested at his coming to judgement.

The end proposed by the church, in setting these two appearances of Christ together before us at this time, is to beget in our minds proper dispositions to celebrate the one, and expect the other; that so, with joy and thankfulness, we may now "go to "Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, "which the Lord hath made known unto us," even the Son of God come to visit us in great humility! and thence, with faith unfeigned, and hope immoveable, ascend in heart and mind to meet the same Son of God in the air, coming in glorious majesty, to judge the quick and dead.

And certainly, if any thing can lead men to repentance, and turn the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of that Just One, the wisdom which maketh

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wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus, it must be the united considerations of his mercy and his justice: his infinite mercy during the day of grace, when all sins, that can be repented of, are forgiven unto men; his inexorable justice at the day of retribution, when he shall infallibly render unto every man according as his work shall be. And perhaps there is no better method of stirring up our wills to procure an interest, or of discovering the interest we already possess, in the love of Christ, than by viewing in their proper colours the terrors of his judgement, as they will show themselves to the astonished world at that awful hour of his second advent; when the mask put upon false principles and evil actions shall drop off, and all things be estimated by the measures of Christianity, and the standard of the Gospel of Jesus.

The words of the divine and well-beloved John now read, are, it is presumed, not improper for this purpose, as they evidently fall in with the design of our church at this season, and speak the same language with her Advent services—"Behold, he com-"eth with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they "also which pierced him; and all the kindreds of the "earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen."

In these words we may observe,

I. Christ's advent to judgement, with the manner of it: "Behold, he cometh with "clouds."

II. The circumstance of the world's beholding him, and the effect it shall produce: "Every "eye shall see him, and they also which

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"pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth "shall wail because of him."

III. The faith and hope of the church, displayed by her wishing and praying for his manifestation, notwithstanding all the terrors that are to attend it: "Even so, Amen."

First, then, we are to consider Christ's advent to judgement. There is something wonderfully awful and affecting in the short description the text gives us of it. The beautiful manner, particularly, in which it is introduced, is worthy of notice. St. John, having occasion to mention his dear Lord and Master, at whose command he wrote this epistle to the churches, fired and transported at the glorious name, runs on with amazing rapidity, enumerating the blessings of the redemption which is by him; and having carried him from his cross to his throne, and ascribed all glory to him sitting upon it, immediately he sees him in the clouds, and breaks forth in the words of the text. The whole passage runs thus: "John to the "seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto "you, and peace from him which is, and which was, "and which is to come; and from the seven spirits "which are before his throne; and from Jesus Christ, "who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten "from the dead, and the prince of the kings of the "earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from "our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings "and priests unto God and his Father; unto him be "glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.— "Behold, he cometh!" It is evident likewise, at first sight, how well this sudden and abrupt introduc-

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tion is calculated to awaken our attention to what follows. "The corruptible body, alas! presseth down "the soul that museth on many things," and especially when it museth on the things of eternity. Multitudes lie asleep in their sins, amused with delusive dreams; dead to their true views and interests, as a corpse sleeping in the dust is dead to the views and interests of this life. Therefore the Holy Spirit, about to make proclamation of Christ's second advent, first sounds a trumpet in Sion, and an alarm in the holy mountain, and ushers it in with an emphatical—*Behold!* which, like the voice of that wakeful bird that gives the first notice of the approach of the morning, and as a prelude to the archangel's trump, which is to give notice of the approach of the last morning that shall ever rise upon the world, is designed to awaken a careless and indolent generation out of its lethargy, importing the same in this place, with those other frequent calls of the apostles and prophets—"Awake, thou that sleepest, and "arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee "light." "Arise, shine, for thy light is coming, and "the glory of the Lord is rising upon thee."

"Behold, he cometh!" And is not this a sight most worthy of our attention? Is it not very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should open the eyes of our faith, which the bewitching cup of pleasure and vanity, mingled by a deceitful world for our destruction, has charmed to sleep? that we should "lift up our heads, and look up, to see our redemp-"tion drawing nigh?" For draw nigh it will, and it does, whether we consider it or not. Every even-

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ing takes a day from the world's duration. The portion of the wicked is so much less, and the time of their punishment so much approached; the sufferings of the patient so much diminished, and their hopes of deliverance so much increased. Nay, every clock that strikes, bids us recollect that the promise of Christ has then received an additional force: "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, "to give to every man according as his work shall "be." The precise day and hour knoweth no man. Though probably as it was at his first advent, so likewise will it be at his second. The faithful servants, who are watching for the return of their Lord, and "looking for redemption in Jerusalem," will be able by the books of the Scriptures, and the signs of the times, to tell when the day is approaching. But what avails a curious disquisition upon the exact period of the world's dissolution? What is likely to be the fate of those malefactors, who, instead of preparing for their trial, spend the small portion of time allotted them, in disputing with each other concerning the hour in which the trumpet shall sound, and the Judge make his entry? In this, above all other cases, "blessed is the man that feareth always." "Blessed is that servant, who, whether his master "cometh at the second watch, or whether he cometh "at the third watch," is ready to receive him and exhibit his accounts. Blessed, in short, is he, and he only, who hears continually these words of the beloved John: "Behold he cometh."

He cometh, indeed! But how changed! how different his appearance from what it was! How shall

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we be able to conceive of it as it deserves, to raise our thoughts from the voice of the tender babe in the manger, bewailing our sins that brought him thither, to the voice of the Son of God, from which the heavens and the earth shall fly away, and no place be found for them any more for ever! Yet so it is. Behold, he who came in swaddling-clothes, cometh with clouds. He who came to preach the day of salvation, cometh again to proclaim the day of vengeance. He who was led as a lamb to the slaughter, leads his ten thousands to the prey, as the lion of the tribe of Judah. He who cried not, nor lifted up his voice against his enemies upon earth, thunders with the glorious voice of his excellency against them from heaven. He who never brake a bruised reed, rules the nations with a rod of iron, and breaks them in pieces like a potter's vessel. He who quenched not the smoking flax, extinguishes the great lights of the world; darkens the sun, and turns the moon into blood; commands the stars from their stations, and the dead from their graves; shakes the powers of heaven, and the foundations of the earth, and all hearts that are not fixed on him.

The trumpet sounds, and he is coming. The everlasting gates of heaven, which lifted up their heads for the King of Glory to enter in, are again lifted up; and behold the procession that comes forth of them, descending to this lower world, as it is described by one who saw it in vision: "I saw heaven opened, "and behold a white horse, and he that sat upon "him was called faithful and true," the accomplisher of all his promises; "and in righteousness he doth

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"judge" the world, "and make war" against all that oppose him. "His eyes were as a flame of fire," discerning and destroying the counsels of his adversaries; "and on his head were many crowns;" all the kingdoms of this world were become his; "and "he had a name written that no one knew, but he "himself," the ineffable name of the divine essence. "And he was clothed with a vesture dipt in blood," the garment of vengeance. "And his name," by which he is known to men, "is called THE WORD "OF GOD. And the armies which are in heaven "followed him upon white horses," attending him in his glory, "clothed in fine linen, white and clean," which is the righteousness of saints. "And out of "his mouth goeth a sharp sword," namely, his holy word, "that with it he should smite the nations. "And he shall rule them," that have rejected the golden sceptre of mercy, "with a rod of iron. And he "treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath "of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture "and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, "AND LORD OF LORDS."

When Joshua, at the head of the armies of Israel, surrounded Jericho, at the sound of the trumpet the walls fell flat. When the divine Joshua, at the head of the armies of the true Israel of God, the church triumphant, surrounds this city of destruction, can the event be otherwise? Assuredly it cannot. The strength, beauty, and glory of the world will fall, and come to nothing, at the moment when the trumpet sounding from the one end of heaven to the other, shall give notice, that the judge of all the

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earth is coming to his judgement-seat in the air. The throne that shall be there erected for him is thus described by Daniel—"I beheld till the thrones were "cast down, and the Ancient of Days did sit; whose "garment was white as snow, and the hair of his "head like the pure wool. His throne was like the "fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire: a "fiery stream issued, and came forth from before "him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, "and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before "him. The judgement was set, and the books were "opened." In the clouds over our heads is this judgement-seat to be formed; as it is also written in the book of Psalms—"Clouds and darkness are "round about him, righteousness and judgement are "the habitation of his throne." From amidst this thick darkness the lightnings, those swift executioners of divine vengeance, shall flash abroad over the earth, while ten thousand thunders, rolling forth from the glorious God that maketh them, shall at once utter their tremendous voices; as it is written again in the same book of Psalms—"Our God shall come, and "shall not keep silence," as once, when, like a sheep dumb before his shearers, he opened not his mouth. "A fire shall now devour before him, and it shall "be very tempestuous round about him. "The "Lord," even the Lord Jesus, "shall thunder out "of heaven, and the Highest give his thunder, hail-"stones, and coals of fire." By the brightness of his coming all enemies shall soon be consumed, all clouds shall pass away; and the Judge shall appear upon his radiant throne, like his emblem the sun;

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so that there shall not be a tongue but must own, with the church in her triumphant song, "Heaven "and earth are full of the majesty of thy glory." And as Christ upon his throne, like the sun, will see all, so, like the sun, he will be seen of all; which brings us to the

II. Thing to be considered, namely, the circumstance of mankind beholding him, with the effect it shall produce upon them: "Every eye shall see "him, and they also which pierced him; and all the "kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him."

The Judge being seated on his throne, and all things subdued to him, "before him shall be ga-"thered all nations," all the innumerable multitudes of men and women that have lived in every age and every country. Every eye shall see the God that made it, and commanded it to be pure and single. How it has fulfilled his commandment, will then be known. The sight of Christ upon his throne will be a trying sight; the effects of it will enter the heart like the piercings of a sword, and reveal all its thoughts in the countenance; hypocrisy shall then be no more. "Every eye shall see him." But who shall be able to endure the sight? Even "they that "pierced him" must "look on him whom they "pierced." Pilate will behold the poor despised Galilean, whom he scourged and delivered to be crucified, now ready to judge him and all the world. Herod and his men of war, who mocked and set him at naught, will see him encompassed with ten thousands of saints and angels, about to speak unto them in his wrath, and trouble them in his sore displeasure.

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A corrupt temporizing Sanhedrim, who were instant with loud voices that he might be crucified, will see heaven and earth fly away from before the face of that priest, of whom they, his representatives, were the betrayers and murderers. They who platted and put on the crown of thorns, shall be struck blind with rays of glory beaming from his sacred head. And they who drove the nails, and he who thrust the spear into his side, shall see that same Jesus, whom they pierced, exalted above every name that is named in heaven and earth.

But think not that the Jews, who crucified Christ, are the only persons that will have reason to tremble at this sight. There are others who may dread it, as well as they. Those whose sins, yet unrepented of, sharpened the nails, and pointed every thorn. Those careless ones, who are at ease; whose hearts, harder than the rocks that rent asunder at his crucifixion, remain unmoved at the sight of the Son of God dying upon the cross for them, and calling from thence to a thoughtless world—"Is it nothing to "you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see, if there "be any sorrow like unto my sorrow which is done "unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in "the day of his fierce anger?"

Bishop Taylor, in one of his Advent sermons, has an expostulation with a sinner upon this subject, which is so just, beautiful, and affecting, and so infinitely beyond any thing I can offer, that I shall not only have your pardon, but your thanks for reciting it. "It was for thy sake "that the Judge did suffer unspeakable pains, such

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"as were sufficient to reconcile all the world to God. "And to consider that thou hast, for thine own par-"ticular, made all this in vain, and ineffective; that "Christ thy Lord and Judge should be tormented "for nothing; that thou wouldest not accept felicity "and pardon, when he purchased them at so dear a "price; it must needs be an infinite condemnation "to thee. How shalt thou look upon him that "fainted and died for love of thee, and thou didst "scorn his miraculous mercies? How shalt thou "dare to behold that holy face which brought sal-"vation to thee, and thou didst turn away, and fall "in love with death, and deformity, and sin? And "yet in the beholding that face consists much of "the glories of eternity. Surely all the pains and "the passions, the sorrows and the groans, the hu-"mility and poverty, the labours and the watch-"ings, the prayers and the sermons, the miracles "and the prophecies, the whip and the nails, the "death and the burial, the shame and the smart, "the cross and the grave of Jesus, shall be laid "upon thy score, if thou hast refused the mercies "and design of all their holy ends and purposes. "And if thou rememberest what a calamity that was, "which broke the Jewish nation in pieces, when "Christ came to judge them for their murdering "him, who was their king, and the prince of life; "and considerest, that this was but a dark image "of the terrors of the day of judgement, thou mayest "then apprehend, that there is some strange un-"speakable evil in store for one who refuses the sal-"vation of Jesus, and rather chooses that Satan



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"should rejoice in his destruction, than that Jesus "should triumph in his felicity."

Thus far this excellent prelate. And all who consider the matter in this its true and proper light, cannot wonder at the effect which, as St. John in the text tells us, the sight of Christ will produce among the kindreds of the earth. They shall wail because of Christ, when they see him whom they have pierced by their sins, and crucified afresh. And that wailing must needs be terrible, when millions of men and women shall at the same instant fearfully cry out, and the noise shall mingle with the trumpet of the archangel, and the thunders of the dying and groaning heavens passing away with a great noise, and the roaring of the flames in which the earth and all the works that are therein shall then be dissolving. The terror and lamentation throughout the world at that time, with the foreboding pangs and convulsions of departing nature, will be such as never were, since the day that God created man upon the earth. Include in your idea the destruction of the old world by the flood, the overthrow of the cities of the plain by fire and brimstone, and the desolation of Jerusalem by the Roman armies, with an assemblage of the plagues of Egypt, and the miseries and calamities felt by men in all ages, yet your conceptions will fall as far short of the things themselves, as the shadow does of the substance. Nothing can exceed our blessed Lord's description of this last scene, but its actual accomplishment—"There "shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in "the stars: and upon the earth distress of na-

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"tions, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roar-
"ing; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for
"looking after those things which are coming on the
"earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.
"And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man
"in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the
"earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man
"coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and
"great glory." At this most awful and tremendous hour, when the Son of man shall display his banner, the cross, in the clouds; when the sea and the waters of the great deep shall roar; when the destroying angel shall again go forth at midnight into the land of Egypt, and there shall be a great cry throughout all the land, because of death and judgement; then shall be brought to pass that which is written in the Revelation: "I beheld when the kings of the earth, and
"the great men, and the rich men, and the chief cap-
"tains, and the mighty men, and every bondman,
"and every freeman hid themselves in the dens, and
"in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the moun-
"tains and rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the
"face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the
"wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath
"is come, and who shall be able to stand?"

A view of the terrors of the Lord has by this time, perhaps, made us all ready to join in asking this last question, "Who shall be able to stand?" And we cannot help taking up our parable with Balaam; "Alas! who shall live, when God doth this?" But, thanks be to God, an answer will be abundantly



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ministered unto us by a consideration of the

III, And last point proposed, namely, the faith and hope of the church, who wishes for Christ's manifestation, notwithstanding all the terrors that are to attend it, as appears by the remaining words of my text—" Even so, Amen."

For these are not the words of St. John only, but they carry in them the prayers and sighs of Christians, sent up to the throne of grace through him. It is not " the Spirit" alone, speaking by him, that says " Come;" but " the bride," or church, also says the same. " How long," O Lord, " holy and true," is the voice of the departed spirits, resting from their labours under the altar in heaven, and waiting for the completion of their glory, at the day of their Redeemer's triumph? And that part of the church which is still militant, and sojourns in the wilderness, may be heard earnestly joining in the same expostulation, in the lxivth chapter of the prophet Isaiah: " O that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou " wouldest come down, that the mountains might " flow down at thy presence; as when the melting " fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil; " to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that " the nations may tremble at thy presence! When " formerly thou didst terrible things, which we looked " not for, thou camest down, the mountains flowed " down at thy presence." Nay, we ourselves, every one of us, daily put up the very same petition to God, when we pray that " his kingdom may come;" for his kingdom of glory cannot come, till all these

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things shall have been brought to pass. And again, when, standing at the grave's mouth, we have before our eyes a plain proof, that "man, who is born of "a woman, hath but a short time to live" in this world; we earnestly beseech the Father of spirits, "that it would please him of his gracious goodness "shortly to accomplish the number of his elect, and "to hasten his kingdom." Thus the coming of that day, in which "all the kindreds of the earth shall "wail," is the constant subject of the wishes and prayers of the sons of God. A sound Christian faith gives them confidence towards God, and teaches them, without hypocrisy, to pray for the second advent of Christ. For although in that day "he cometh "with clouds," yet God's promise is, that whenever "he brings his cloud" over the earth, his "bow "shall be in the cloud," the sure token of the "ever-"lasting covenant of mercy between him and all "flesh." And accordingly, when Ezekiel and St. John saw Christ upon his terrible throne, he appeared encompassed with a RAINBOW, to teach us that even the throne of judgement is encircled by mercy, which rejoices against judgement. All the cries of despairing nations, the thunders of heaven, and the horrible noises of the perishing earth, shall not keep those who have been indeed the disciples of Jesus, from hearing a voice say unto them, "Come up hither." Yea, and they who in faith and patience have waited for the Lord, as the prophet Isaiah speaks, "shall then renew their strength, "they shall mount up as eagles." They shall ascend to meet their Redeemer in the air, and the eye of

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faith shall steadfastly behold the glories of the Sun of Righteousness. Marvel no longer, then, that the church so passionately desires the manifestation of Christ. Marvel not that she should say, COME! when the advent of him to whom she speaks is to be the day of her espousals, and the day of the gladness of her heart; the end of her Saviour's sufferings, and her faith; a day of triumph and everlasting felicity. Let the men of the world lament, for their joy is ended, and their sorrows beginning; but let the redeemed be glad, for their sorrows are at an end, and their joys beginning. Let the "tribes of "the earth mourn," but "let Israel rejoice in him "that made him, and let the children of Sion be "joyful in their king." For the trumpet which proclaims the destruction of the ungodly, declares at the same time the salvation of the righteous. When that *trumpet* sounds throughout the land, the eternal *jubilee* is begun. There is liberty for the captives, and the opening of the prison doors, even the gates of the grave, for those to come out who lie there in darkness and in the shadow of death; and every child of God is free to return to his possession and inheritance, and to the family of his heavenly Father. When they who have loved the world, instead of him whom the world crucified, and trusted in the false glory and riches of earthly Babylon, shall "stand "weeping and wailing, to see the smoke of her "burning, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that "was clothed in purple, and fine linen, and scarlet, "and decked with gold and precious stones; how "in one hour is so great riches come to naught!"—

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What saith the Spirit to the church? "Rejoice over "her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and pro-"phets, for God hath avenged you on her." And what saith the church herself? "The kingdoms of "this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord "and his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and "ever." "Halleluiah, for the Lord God omnipotent "reigneth. Let us be glad, and rejoice, and give "honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is "come, and his wife hath made herself ready."

And now, my brethren, whose heart does not burn within him, when he hears the melody of the celestial choir chanting forth the praises of their victorious Redeemer, round his glorious throne? Is there a single person here, whose soul has not a desire and longing to enter into the courts of the Lord, and to bear his part in the never-ending chorus? But know, O man, whosoever thou art, that hast this desire and longing, know thou must be a penitent upon earth, before thou canst be a saint in heaven. Thou must be holy in time, if thou wouldest be glorious in eternity. Acquaint now, therefore, thyself with God, and be at peace with him, thyself, and all mankind; thereby, and thereby only, shall good come unto thee at thy latter end. Stop not thine ears, and harden not thine heart against instruction, when it is the day of trial and probation in the wilderness. Receive now, I pray thee, the law of the Most High; retire, and meditate upon it, and lay up his words in thy heart; nor suffer the world to rob thee of that wisdom which is more precious than rubies, and to which all the things

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thou canst desire are not to be compared. Fear not, neither be dismayed, because of the multitude of thy past transgressions, which present themselves to thy troubled conscience and set themselves in array against thee. God can forgive, if thou canst repent. Nay, he will "give thee repentance unto "life," if thou wilt request it of him. If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt yet be built up, and, impossible as it may appear, thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacle; thou shalt cease to do evil, and learn to do good: thou shalt cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life: thou shalt have thy delight in the Almighty, and lift up thy face unto God: thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee; he shall not lay thy sins to thy charge, but forgive thee what is past, and give thee grace to amend thy sinful life; to decline from the ways of the destroyer, in which, perhaps, thou hast unhappily wandered, and incline to the paths of wisdom and righteousness, and walk therein before him all the days of thy life. And when the work shall be finished, for which God sent thee into the world, even the work of thy salvation, thou wilt perceive that to depart and to be with Christ is far better than to live here in possession of all that the world can give thee. Thou shalt go out with joy, and be led forth with peace by angels, who shall convey and welcome thy spirit to the regions of the living, to the bosoms of our holy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whence sorrow, grief, and lamentation are banished away, where the light

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of God's countenance visits and shines continually. And when the trumpet shall sound, and all the tribes and kindreds of the earth shall wail, thou shalt lift up thy voice and sing for the majesty and glory of thy triumphant Lord, and call to the heavens and the earth to bear thee company—" Let the heavens re-
" joice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea make
" a noise, and all that is therein; let the field be
" joyful, and all that is in it; then shall all the trees
" of the wood rejoice before the Lord; for he com-
" eth, for he cometh to judge the earth, and with
" righteousness to judge the world, and the people
" with his truth." " He which testifieth these things
" saith, Surely I come quickly, Amen. Even so,
" come, Lord Jesus."

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# DISCOURSE VII.

## THE WORD INCARNATE.

JOHN, I. 14.

*The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.*

IN contemplating the character of man's Redeemer, it is hard to say, whether our admiration be most excited by the natural dignity, or the voluntary abasement of his person. To form suitable ideas of either, it is expedient to take a view of both. And they appear to the utmost advantage in the exordium of St. John's Gospel, where he setteth himself to publish, first, the divinity, and then the incarnation of his most adorable and beloved Master. He mentions in due order and regular gradation, the glory which the WORD had with the Father, before man, or the world which he now inhabits, had a being: "In the beginning was the Word, and the "Word was with God, and the Word was God." —His glory, with respect to the creatures, the works of his hands; "All things were made by him, and "without him was not any thing made that was "made."—His glory, as the sole author of life and immortality; "In him was life, and the life was the

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"light of men."—His glory, with respect to man in general, as fallen into a state of ignorance and sensuality; "And the light shined in darkness, and the "darkness comprehended it not."—His glory, with respect to the Jews, to whom he first manifested "himself; "He came unto his own, and his own "received him not."—His glory, with respect to Christians; "To as many as believed on him gave "he power to become the sons of God;" in order to effect which, he himself became the Son of man; "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, "and we beheld his glory, as the glory of the only "begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

Can any thing be more truly noble and sublime than the former part of the evangelist's discourse, more pleasing and acceptable than the latter, descending from the loftiest of speculations on the divine nature of the Word, to display the benefits of his advent in the flesh: like the Nile, which, rolling from the heights of the Nubian mountains, diffuseth riches and plenteousness over all the land of Egypt?

The union of two natures in the person of our Lord, which may justly be considered as the source of every blessing we enjoy in time, or hope to enjoy in eternity, is expressed by St. John in these terms: "The word was made flesh[a]," each of which will be found worthy of our attention. The term *Word* (λογος) was in use among the ancient philosophers, who sometimes speak of a person under that appel-

[a] Ο λογος σαρξ εγενετο.

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lation, as the maker of the universe. So Tertullian informs the Gentiles[b]. And Eusebius, in the xith book of his Evangelical Preparation, cites a passage from Amelius, a celebrated admirer and imitator of Plato, in which he speaks of the λογος as being eternal and the maker of all things. This, he says, was the opinion of Heraclitus; and then introduces the beginning of the Gospel of St. John; concerning whom, it seems, he was wont to complain, that he had transferred into his book the sentiments of his master Plato.

But it is not likely that our evangelist either borrowed from, or intended to copy after, Plato. And since not only Plato, but Pythagoras and Zeno likewise, conversed with the Jews, it is not at all wonderful, that we meet with something about ΘΕΙΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ, or Divine Word, in their writings. Nor, after all, might the philosopher and the apostle use the same term in the same acceptation.

It is customary with the writers of the New Testament to express themselves, as much as may be, in the language of the Old, to which, therefore, we must have recourse for an explanation of their meaning, as the penmen of both, under the direction of one Spirit, used their terms in the same sense.

Now, upon looking into the Old Testament, we find, that "the Word of Jehovah[c]," is frequently

[b] "Apud vestros quoque sapientes, λογον, id est Sermonem "atque Rationem, constat artificem videri universitatis. Hunc "enim Zeno determinat factitatorem, qui cuncta in dispostione "formaverit."

[c] דבר יהוה.

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and evidently the style of a *person* who is said "to "come, to be revealed or manifested," and the like. As in the xvth chapter of Genesis: "After these "things, the Word of Jehovah came unto Abraham, "in a vision, saying, Fear not Abraham; I am thy "shield, and thy exceeding great reward. And "Abraham said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me," &c.—"Behold the Word of the Lord came unto "him, saying, This shall not be thine heir—and HE "brought him forth abroad," &c. Thus again, 1 Sam. iii. "Jehovah revealed himself to Samuel in "Shiloh by the Word of Jehovah." The same person is, at other times, characterized by the title, "the Name of Jehovah[d]," as in Isaiah, xxx. 27. "Behold, the Name of Jehovah cometh from far, "burning with his anger," &c.

With regard to the nature of the person thus denominated, whoever shall duly consider the attributes, powers, and actions ascribed to him, will see a reason to think of him not as of a created intelligence, but a person of the divine essence, possessed of all its incommunicable properties. And it may be noticed, that the Targums, or Chaldee Paraphrasts, continually substitute *the Word Jehovah*[e], for *Jehovah*[f], ascribing divine characters to the person so named. And the ancient *grecizing* Jews speak in the same style. Thus in that excellent apocryphal book of Wisdom, ix. 1. "O God, who hast made all things, "εν ΛΟΓΩ σου, by thy Word" and again, in the passage which so wonderfully describes the horrors of

[d] שם יהוה. [e] מימרא דיי. [f] יוהה.

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that night, never to be forgotten by an Israelite, wherein the first-born of the Egyptians were slain—"While all things were in quiet silence, and that "night was in the midst of her swift course, thine "Almighty WORD (ΛΟΓΟΣ) leaped down from heaven, "out of the royal throne, as a fierce man of war into "the midst of a land of destruction; and brought "thine unfeigned commandment, as a sharp sword; "and standing up, filled all things with death; and "it touched the heaven, but it stood upon the "earth." Chap. xviii. 14.

But whatever may be thought of these passages, certain it is, that when St. John comes to treat of this WORD, although to show a distinction of personality, he first tells us, "The Word was with God;" yet, to prevent all mistakes on the other side of the question, he instantly adds, "And the Word was "God;" thus evidently asserting an unity of essence.

And let any impartial man only lay together, upon this subject, and duly weigh the few following particulars: that St. John tells us, "The Word was "God," and "the Word was made flesh," that St. Paul says, "God was manifest in the flesh; God "was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself; "and in him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead "bodily;" that our Saviour is styled JEHOVAH, a name appropriated to the Deity; that he says of himself, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and "the last[8]"—"I am he that searcheth the hearts and

[8] Upon this passage, which is found Rev. i. 11. Dr. DODDRIDGE has the following Note—"That these titles (which

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"reins;" that he created the world by his power, redeemed it by his mercy, and governs it by his providence, and shall judge it in righteousness; let any impartial man, I say, consider these things with the attention they deserve, and determine for himself, concerning the nature and dignity of him who was incarnate for our salvation.

Should it be asked, why this person is styled the Word? the proper answer seems to be, that as a thought or conception of the understanding, is brought forth and communicated in *speech* or *discourse*, so is the divine will made known by the Word, who is the offspring and emanation of the eternal mind; an emanation pure and undivided, like that of light which is the proper issue of the sun, and yet coeval with its parent orb; since the sun cannot be supposed, by the most exact and philosophical imagination, to exist a moment, without emitting light; and were the one eternal, the other, though strictly and properly produced by it, would be as strictly and properly co-eternal with it. So true is the assertion of the Nicene fathers; so apt the instance subjoined

"occur just above in ver. 8.) should be repeated so soon in a "connexion which demonstrates they are given to Christ, will "appear very remarkable, whatever sense be given in the "eighth verse. The argument drawn in the preceding note upon "it, would have been strong, wherever such a passage as this had "been found; but its immediate connexion with this, greatly "strengthens it. And I cannot forbear recording it, that this "text has done more than any other in the Bible, towards pre-"venting me from giving into that scheme, which would make "our Lord Jesus Christ no more than a deified creature."

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for its illustration, "God of God, Light of Light:" in apostolical language, "The brightness of his Father's "glory, and the express image of his person[h]." And whether we consider our Lord under the idea of the Word, or that of Light, it will lead us to the same conclusion respecting his office. For as no man can discover the mind of another, but by the word which proceedeth from him; as no man can see the sun, but by the light which itself emitteth; even so, "No man knoweth the Father, save the "Son, and him to whomsoever the Son will reveal "him[i]."

This glorious Word this uncreated Light, was united to our nature in the person of Christ; "The "Word was made *flesh*." *Flesh*, which is a part of our nature, stands here for the whole; and, being the baser part of the composition, seems purposely mentioned, to intimate, that the care and love of Heaven extended even to that; that our bodies, no less than our spirits, are included in the scheme of redemption; so that while the soul reposeth, in humble confidence, on the mercies of Jesus, the *flesh* also may "rest in hope." In flesh, and by the instigation of flesh, the offence was committed. By taking flesh upon him, therefore, the great Physician, the sovereign healer of all our maladies, corrected the bad qualities of the fountain, that the streams might flow pure and salutary. In flesh the offence was committed, and therefore in flesh satisfaction

[h] Απαυγασμα της δοξης, και χαρακτηρ της υποστασεως.
[i] Matth. xi. 27.

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must be made for it. Our High Priest was incarnate, that he might have something to offer, more valuable and efficacious than the flesh of bulls and calves. "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a "body hast thou prepared me. In burnt offerings "and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure; "then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the "book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God[k]." The nature that sinned, according to the rules of justice, was to suffer for sin: and the word was made flesh, for the same reason that, when so made, he was baptized by John, "To fulfil all "righteousness." "And as Christ took manhood, "that by it he might be capable of death, where-"unto he humbled himself; so, because manhood "is the proper subject of compassion and feeling "pity, which maketh the sceptre of Christ's regency, "even in the kingdom of heaven, to be amiable; "he, who without our nature could not on earth "suffer for the sins of the world, doth now also, "by means thereof, both make intercession to God "for sinners, and exercise dominion over all men, "with a true, a natural, and a sensible touch of "pity[l]."

As the Divinity is an object by no means within the grasp of human understanding, it were absurd to expect an adequate idea of the mode of its union with flesh, expressed in the text by the word "made[m];" "The Word was *made* flesh." It suf-

[k] Psal. xl. 6.; Heb. x. 5. [l] Hooker, Ecclesiast. Polity, v. 51.
[m] Εγενετο.



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ficeth, in this case, to maintain the general truth of the proposition against those, who, in different ways, by subtilty and sophistry, have laboured to oppugn and destroy it. We must not, with Arius, deny the Saviour to be truly God, because he became man; nor assert, with Apollinarius, that he was not really man, because he was also God. We must not, with Nestorius, rend Christ asunder, and divide him into two persons; nor, after the example of Eutyches, confound in his person those natures which should be distinguished. These were the four capital errors, which, in the earlier ages, harassed and distracted the Christian church, on the point of the incarnation; and in opposition to which, the four most ancient general councils of Nice, Constantinople, Ephesus, and Chalcedon, were called. Whatever was by them decreed, either in the declaration of Christian belief, or refutation of heresy, may all be comprised, as judicious Hooker well noteth, in four words, "truly, perfectly, indivisibly, "distinctly[n];" truly God, perfectly man, indivisibly one person, distinctly two natures. "Within the "compass of which four heads," saith he, "I may "truly affirm, that all heresies which touch the per-"son of Jesus Christ (whether they have risen in "the latter days, or in any age heretofore), may "be with great facility brought to confine them-"selves[o]."

The apostle to the Hebrews, writing on the sub-

[n] Αληθως, τελεως, αδιαιρετως, ασυγχυτως.

[o] Book v. Sect. 54.

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ject of the incarnation, thus expresseth himself: "He taketh not hold of angels, but he taketh hold of "the seed of Abraham[p];" he took or assumed the manhood into God. As the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ. The soul is not turned into, nor compounded with, the body: yet they two, though distinct in nature, form one man. The natures are preserved, without confusion; the person is entire, without division[q].

Thus then, as the necessity of the case, and the counsels of the Most High, required, "The Word "was made flesh;" and, being made flesh, "dwelt "amongst us;" not appearing occasionally, as in ancient times, but making his abode with his creatures; "rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, "and delighting to be with the sons of men;" insomuch that we read of those, who were not afraid to ask him, "Master, where dwellest thou?" and received this gracious answer, "Come and see." "He "pitched his tent among us[r]," a stranger and a sojourner, as his fathers were, concerning whom it is the apostle's observation, that though the heirs of the promise, they lived in tents, shifting from place to place, and declaring, that here, on earth, they

[p] Ου γαρ δηπου αγγελων επιλαμβανεται, αλλα σπερματος Αβρααμ επιλαμβανεται.

[q] Sic factum est Caro, ut maneret Verbum; non immutando quod erat, sed assumendo quod non erat: nostra auxit, sua non minuit; nec sacramentum pietatis detrimentum Deitatis. Concil. Chalced.

[r] Εσκηνωσεν εν ημιν.



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had no permanent city, but looked for one to come. The fleshly tabernacle, in which he resided, at the close of his pilgrimage, was to be taken down, in order afterwards to be re-erected in a more glorious manner, and for ever fixed at the right hand of God; like the GLORY of old, which first travelled with Israel through the wilderness in a moveable tent, and then at length, rested in a durable temple, on the hill of Sion. As the Captain of our salvation, the Leader of the Israel of God, he preceded his people to the battle against their spiritual enemies; and now, as King of glory, crowned with victory and honour, he is seated on his throne, holding forth rewards to all his faithful soldiers and servants, which they are to receive at his hands, when the days of their pilgrimage and warfare shall be ended.

But let us not imagine that even in the state of humiliation, his glory was altogether obscured by the veil within which it dwelt; or that its frequent irradiations were not sufficient to convince those who beheld the house, how illustrious a guest it had the honour to contain. Eye-witnesses have given a different account. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld his glory, the "glory as of the only begotten of the Father." The sun was covered with a cloud; but it was the sun still; and often manifested, through the cloud, the power and brightness of its beams.

That Christ was man, the labours and the sorrows, the stripes, the wounds, the pains, and the death, which, as man, he suffered, did fully attest. But they who saw the most boisterous elements in

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nature cease from raging, and compose themselves into a perfect calm, when he said, "Peace, be still;" they who saw a foul and inveterate leprosy done away in a moment, by the words, "Be clean;" they who saw a body, that had been four days dead, arise from its tomb, when he called, "Lazarus, come "forth;" these might well ask, "What manner of "man is this, that even the winds and the sea, dis-"ease, and death itself, obey him?" Outwardly, indeed, he appears to be a man; but surely, under that form, a celestial visitant is come among us. Is not this the Lord of nature? Is not this man's Almighty Redeemer?

When, at the marriage of Cana, he had caused water to change its nature and properties, and to become wine, it is said, "This beginning of miracles "did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and *manifested forth his glory*; and his disciples believed on him."

But our evangelist saw more. He was one of those who attended their Master on the mount of transfiguration, and to whom was vouchsafed a glimpse of that excellent glory which the Word "had with the Father before the world was," and with which the humanity, by him assumed, is now for ever invested. The Divinity, enshrined within, communicated its radiance outwardly to the body, and even to the garments, till mortality seemed to be swallowed up of life; "His face did shine as the "sun, and his raiment was white as the light." The "Lord our God became exceeding glorious, "he was clothed with majesty and honour, he

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"decked himself with light as it were with a gar-
"ment."

And if we reflect upon the manner in which it pleased the Father to exalt and ennoble the most abasing circumstances of his life and death, by the choir of angels that descended to celebrate his birth; the new star which appeared in the skies, guiding the Eastern sages to Bethlehem; the voice which answered him from heaven, in the audience of the Jews; the preternatural eclipse of the sun at his crucifixion; recollecting, at the same time, the triumph of his resurrection, and the manner of his ascension in the presence of his disciples; all these particulars conspire to declare the glory not of a servant, as Moses, but of a Son, of "the only begotten;" a glory not of magnificence only, or one beset with terrors, like that of Sinai, but bearing towards man, in every instance, a benign and most friendly aspect; as the same bright luminary, which rises in glorious majesty upon the earth, gives life, health, and gladness to all its inhabitants. "We beheld his glory, the "glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of "grace and truth."

In a subsequent verse of this chapter, we find "grace and truth" set in opposition to the Mosaic law. "The law was given by Moses, but grace "and truth came by Jesus Christ." The law was the dispensation of justice, austere, rigorous, inflexible. "He that doeth these things, shall live in "them;" and, "Cursed is he that continueth not in "all things that are written in the book of the law,

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"to do them." The Gospel is the dispensation of mercy, mild, gracious, forgiving, saying to the unhappy transgressor of the law, "Believe in the Lord "Jesus, and thou shalt be saved." The law could only make sin known, and, by consequence, aggravate its guilt; the Gospel can pardon sin, and abolish its guilt. Such is the contrast between the moral law and "grace." The ceremonial stands opposed to "truth," not as being *false*, but *figurative*. "The law had a shadow of good things to come; "but the body," the substance, the reality, the truth, pointed at, and delineated by such a shadowy representation, "is of Christ." The blood of bulls and goats, for instance, was offered, but it could not take away sin; it was never intended so to do; it was "a figure for the time then present," designed to direct the faith of the offerer to its correspondent truth, namely, the blood of Messiah, to be afterwards shed for that purpose. In itself the law was ineffectual, and of course, if rested in, proved fallacious and destructive.

But the words, as they stand in the text, may be taken in a more extended sense, comprehending the whole world, which, at the time of Christ's advent, was in a state of *error and condemnation*. The two blessings, therefore, of which it stood most eminently in need, were "grace and truth;" grace to deliver it from condemnation, and truth to correct its errors. Both these God by Christ did vouchsafe to bestow upon it, "He hath made us accepted[a] in the be-

[a] Εχαρίτωσεν ημᾶς: Ephes. i. 6.

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"loved," remitting our sins, and receiving us to favour. He hath also shown us the true and the right way, enabling, as well as directing, us to walk therein. Grace, without truth, can only mock us; truth, without grace, can only affright us. But when grace hath brought us to him, truth will keep us with him; and through grace we shall accomplish what truth requireth at our hands. "Surely his salvation is nigh "them that fear him, that glory may dwell in our "land. Mercy and truth are met together, right-"eousness and peace have kissed each other[t]."

With wonder, gratitude, and joy, therefore, let us reflect upon the honour done us by the Word being MADE FLESH. Our nature is exalted to the throne of God; there is a MAN in heaven! The disciples beheld Christ's glory in the days of his humiliation; but eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the glory with which God hath now invested "that body which "it hath pleased him to make his own; that body "wherewith he hath saved the world; that body "which hath been and is the root of eternal life, the "instrument wherewith Deity worketh, the sacrifice "which taketh away sin, the price which hath ran-"somed souls from death, the leader of the whole "army of bodies that shall rise again. For though "it had a beginning from us, yet God hath given it "vital efficacy. Heaven hath endowed it with celes-"tial power, that virtue which it hath from above,

[t] Psal. lxxxv. 9, 10.

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"in regard whereof, all the angels in heaven adore "it[u]."

And if "no man ever yet hated his own flesh," can God hate the flesh, which, by being taken into one person with the Word, is united to the Godhead? Can the Father hate Him, of whom he more than once declared from heaven, "This is my be-"loved Son, in whom I am well pleased?"—"And "we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of "his bones. It is a great mystery," saith the apostle, "but I speak concerning Christ and the "church[x]."

When man had offended, he fled from his Maker, and dared no more to approach the divine presence. But now that the Word incarnate hath published his general invitation—"O thou that hearest the prayer, "unto thee shall all flesh come!"

If the Son of God became the Son of man, why should it seem a thing incredible, that the sons of men should become the sons of God? "Beloved, "now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet "appear what we shall be; but we know that when "Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we "also appear with him in glory; for we shall see him "as he is[y]."

Delight we, then, to talk (and, since the incarnation of the Word, why should we not delight to talk?) of the dignity of human nature? Let us be careful to act up to it. To a Christian the advice of the philosopher comes with redoubled force; "Reverence

[u] Hooker, Book v. Sect. 54. [x] Ephes. v. 30. [y] 1 John, iii. 2.

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"yourself."—Consider, to whom you are related, by whom you have been begotten again to a lively hope of an unfading inheritance. The stock, from which you are sprung, is noble, it is royal, it is divine. Disgrace it not by base and unworthy actions. Your inheritance is with the saints in light; have no fellowship with the works of darkness. Let your education be suitable to your birth, your conduct answerable to your expectations[z]. The infirmities and dishonours to which mortality is and must be subject, need not discompose and afflict you. Be not dismayed at the approach of pain and sickness; let not the coffin and the shroud terrify you. For though "all flesh be as grass, and all the goodliness of man "as the flower of grass;" though "the grass wither-"eth, the flower fadeth," kindly admonishing you to prepare for an autumn and a winter, when the spring of youth and the summer of manhood shall be past and gone; yet "the Word of God abideth for ever." And this is the Word, which hath been "made flesh, "and dwelt among us;" this is the Word to which your nature is in Christ united; "this is the Word, "which by the Gospel is preached unto you;" whose glory there displayed, "as the glory of the only be-"gotten of the Father," you may now behold; and

[z] Utile esse civitatibus dicit Varro, ut se viri fortes, etiamsi falsum sit, Diis genitos esse credant, ut eo modo humanus animus velut divinæ stirpis fiduciam gerens, res magnas aggrediendas præsumat audacias, et agat vehementius. Augustin. de Civit. Dei, lib. iii. p. 49. See Leland, Advant. and Necess. of Rev. i. 182.

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who, by his "grace" preceding, and his "truth" accompanying, will lead you to a glory, the excellence of which, enjoyment only can enable you to comprehend.

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# DISCOURSE VIII.

## THE CASE OF THE JEWS.

JOHN, I. 11.

*His own received him not.*

THAT the eternal Son of God should condescend, in human form, to visit his people, as their Saviour and Redeemer, is an event, which may well be allowed to excite our admiration. But how does our astonishment rise, when we are informed, that his people refused to receive so gracious a visitant!

The unbeliever, who is continually prying into every corner of ancient and modern history, for arguments to countenance him in his unbelief, seizes, we may be sure, with avidity, on this prominent and marvellous circumstance, and labours to make his advantage of it; affecting to conclude, that the incredulity of the Jew, can only be accounted for, by supposing a deficiency in the evidence laid before him. And the believer, though satisfied that the mission of Jesus stands incontestably proved, will yet often find himself perplexed, when he reflecteth, how strange an occurrence it is, that a people, selected from all others, to be the *peculium* of the Most High; by his mighty hand and stretched-out arm rescued from

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bondage; conducted through all kinds of difficulties and dangers; at length settled in a country destined for their habitation; and their constituted depositaries and guardians of the divine oracles and institutions; that this people should reject and crucify the person all along foretold, as we say, by those oracles, and pointed out by those institutions.

The truth is, that in all the annals of mankind, and in the whole compass of speculation, we meet not with a subject of so very singular and extraordinary a nature, as that now before us, namely, the case of the Jews. It may be added, that there is none, on every account, more deserving the deep and attentive consideration of Christians. Let us, therefore, inquire into the cause of the phenomenon with which they present us. Let us hear their plea, and examine the grounds and reasons on which it is founded.

They did not, because they could not, deny that the Son of Mary wrought miracles; miracles though differing in kind, yet equal, in number and magnitude, to those performed by their own great lawgiver. Why, then, believing Moses, did they not believe him? What was it, that could occasion their infidelity? That which occasions it at all times and in all places, when proper evidence is offered and rejected —The adoption of certain prejudices and prepossessions, as first principles, in opposition to which no evidence is to be admitted. Four points were by them taken for granted, from which flowed all their reasonings and all their proceedings.

The points were these:

*First*, That, as the chosen seed of Abraham,

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they had an exclusive indefeasible right to the favours of Heaven.

*Secondly*, That the law of Moses, on account of its own intrinsic efficacy, and without a view to any thing farther, was ordained for perpetual observance.

*Thirdly*, That the possession of their city, temple, and country, in peace, wealth, and prosperity, was the end of the promises.

*Fourthly*, That the prophecies warranted them in the expectation of a Messiah, who, as a temporal prince, should secure them in such possession, by subduing their civil enemies, and reigning over them in Judea.

If these things were so, they had much, indeed, to say for themselves. But let us see, whether there be not, in their own Scriptures, evidence sufficient to set these positions aside, and to condemn those men, who, upon the strength of them, rejected and crucified Jesus of Nazareth.

Their *first* position was, that, as the chosen seed of Abraham, they had an exclusive and indefeasible right to the favours of Heaven.

For thus, in reading the Gospel history, we find them continually priding themselves in their descent from Abraham; as if, in order to their acceptance with God, nothing were required, but a proof of their relation to that patriarch; and as if, while that relation subsisted, no misconduct of their own could occasion them, as a nation, to forfeit such acceptance. When our Lord spake to them concerning that liberty wherewith he came to make them free, they, mistak-

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ing spiritual for civil liberty, confidently and roundly replied, "We are Abraham's seed, and were never "in bondage to any man[a];" unaccountably forgetting, as it should seem, what they had formerly suffered in Egypt and Babylon, and the state in which they lived, at that very time, under the Roman power. The mention of Heaven's mercy being extended to the Gentiles, always put them beside themselves. Christ only hinted the case of Elijah healing Naaman the *Syrian*, and that of Elisha being sent to a widow of *Sarepta*[b], leaving the application to themselves. They understood him, and endeavoured instantly to destroy him. St. Paul, relating the story of his conversion, was patiently heard, till he touched upon the circumstance of his mission to the Gentiles: "They gave him audience to this word, and then "lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a "fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he "should live[c]!"

Now this notion was taken up in direct opposition to their own Scriptures.

For they neglected to observe, what it was very obvious for any one to observe who read the Scriptures, that Abraham himself was not chosen and blessed, merely as Abraham the son of Terah; but as a servant of God, tried in various ways, and, in all, found faithful and obedient. They should, therefore, have reflected, that his descendants, of course, stood on the same footing, and would not be accounted

[a] John, viii. 33. [b] Luke, iv. 26. [c] Acts, xxii. 22.

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the children of Abraham, when they ceased to do the works of Abraham[d].

The same lesson might have been learned from that part of the sacred history, which records the rejection of Ishmael the eldest son of Abraham; and, afterward, of Esau the first born of Isaac. These transactions evinced, that no dependence could be placed on the incident of being the seed of Abraham; since, of that seed, for certain reasons, some have been rejected, while others were accepted. So it had been formerly; and therefore, in parallel circumstances, so it might be again.

Remarkable, to this purpose, was the case of their ancestors, who came out of Egypt. A promise was made, that they should enter into Canaan. But the promise was afterwards revoked, because it was conditional. They fell in the wilderness, and others succeeded to the inheritance. And why did they not enter into rest? For the same reason which keeps the Jews out, at this hour; because of their unbelief and hardness of heart.

The light of God's countenance was frequently withdrawn from the Israelites, when they sinned, and again restored, upon their repentance. Other qualifications were therefore requisite, without which, it little availed them to be of the house and lineage of Abraham.

It should have been recollected by the Jews, that the grand and capital promise made to Abraham was not limited to his natural posterity, but, on the con-

[d] See John, viii. 39.

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trary, in the most express terms that language could afford, extended to all others. It was the promise of the seed, that is, the Messiah, in whom, not Israel only according to the flesh, but "ALL THE NATIONS "OF THE EARTH should be blessed[e]." And for this reason, the promise was made previous to the covenant of circumcision, under which the Jews claimed. "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto "him for righteousness;" plainly becoming thereby the father of the Gentiles, or "nations of the earth," one day to "be blessed," in the promised Seed, or Messiah.

The Jews trusted in Moses. Wherefore, then, did they not hear Moses, and attend to what he had said to them? In the plainest words he had told them, 1500 years before, what at length appeared to St. Peter, who, for some time, had the prejudices of a Jew about him; "that God did not respect per-"sons[f]"—he had told them, that if they rebelled against their God, they should "be punished, as "*strangers* were punished; and as the *nations*, so "should they perish[g]." Nay, he had clearly predicted, that the days would come, when upon their rejection for their abominable iniquities, the Gentiles should be taken in their room, to "provoke them to jea-"lousy[h]." Before the time of Moses, their progenitor Jacob had declared, that whenever Shiloh should come, "the nations would be gathered to him[i]." How

[e] Gen. xii. 3.
[f] Deut. x. 17. See Acts, x. 34.
[g] Deut. viii. 19, 20.
[h] Deut. xxxii. 20, 21.
[i] Gen. xlix. 10.



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very bold and explicit Isaiah continually is upon this topic of light, life, and salvation to be manifested, through Messiah, to the Gentiles, is well known. Malachi was the last of their prophets. He lived within 400 years of the appearance of Jesus. What a prophecy did he leave upon the subject, penned, as it were, with a sun-beam,—"I have no pleasure in "you, saith the Lord of hosts, neither will I accept "an offering at your hand: for from the rising of the "sun unto the going down of the same, my name "shall be great among the *Gentiles*, and in every "place incense shall be offered unto my name, and "a pure offering: for my name shall be great among "the *Heathen*, saith the Lord of hosts[k]."

Such are the documents and the warnings, contained in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, against the first tenet of the Jews, that, as the chosen seed of Abraham, they had an exclusive and indefeasible right to the favours of Heaven. Yet, with these Scriptures in their hands, in their heads, in their mouths, and upon their phylacteries, boasting and glorying, upon every occasion, in an exact and accurate knowledge of them, did those men, after having crucified Jesus, persecute his apostles unto the death, from city to city, because the Gentiles were invited to share the benefits and blessings of the Gospel.—Such is the force of prejudice! Such the illusion of self-love!

Proceed we to consider their *second* position, namely, that the law of Moses, on account of its

[k] Mal. i. 10, 11.

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own intrinsic efficacy, and without a view to any thing farther, was ordained for perpetual observance.

It was by no means safe, before an audience of Jews, to hint, though ever so remotely, at the inefficacy of the Mosaic rites, considered in themselves, to procure the divine favour; or to insinuate, though ever so covertly, the termination and abolition of that system. Some of the "blasphemous words" charged upon the protomartyr St. Stephen, and for which he was stoned, were these; "that Jesus of "Nazareth should change the customs," or rites, "which Moses delivered[1]." In their ears, this was the worst of blasphemies. It does not appear, that Stephen had used such an expression; it is probable, at that season he was more guarded; and they who deposed their testimony against him, are styled "false witnesses." By urging some prophecy, or parallel, from the Old Testament, as he afterwards urged several in his apology, it is likely he had intimated as much; and the words themselves with which he stands charged, contain nothing more than the truth, sufficiently attested by the law itself; which all along carried in it the most plenary and abundant evidence of its own present inefficacy and future dissolution; as they, who prided themselves in the study and interpretation of it, ought to have known.

For, upon the first view of the law—Let us, for a moment, suppose, with the Jew, that the legal cere-

[1] Acts, vi. 13, 14.



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monies, in themselves, without having respect to any thing above and beyond them, were indeed effective of the purposes for which they were said to be designed.—To what strange conclusions shall we be led? We must conclude, that the death of a beast could render the Deity propitious to the offerer; that a goat could carry the transgressions of a congregation into the wilderness; that the blood of bulls could atone for sin; that water, with the ashes of a red heifer infused in it, could purge away the pollutions of the mind; and the like. But against such conclusions common sense exclaims aloud, and forces us to draw another, and the only just and proper inference, namely, that such rites derived their virtue, not from themselves, but from the persons and actions represented by them; that they were a figure for the time being; a shadow, exhibiting to the faith of the pious and intelligent votary the shape and lineaments of a substance, which did not appear. This must ever be the case of external ceremonies in religion; and we ourselves should be in a situation similar to that of the Jew, if blindly and ignorantly adhering to the letter of our own sacraments, exclusive of the things they signify and the dispositions they require, we should suppose a power inherent in the baptismal water to wash away guilt, and in the eucharistic elements to confer pardon and peace.

Again: Be pleased to observe the opposite character given, at different times, of the same rites. One while it is said, that they were highly acceptable to God: that he was delighted with the savour of the sacrifices, and well pleased, as it is natural to sup-

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pose he should be, with the observance of his own institutions. At other times, we hear Him declaring with indignation, that his soul was weary with offerings, and hated the appointed feasts; that he could not away with the new moons and sabbaths; that incense was an abomination to him; and, in a word, that he would not eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats. Now, if we take the law and its rites to have been things really and ultimately designed, as in themselves excellent and efficacious, they would have been always pleasing to God, like duties intrinsically good and virtuous, of which we never hear the Almighty speaking, as he doth of the sacrifices and oblations. But if the legal rites were figurative; if they were symbolical of internal dispositions and actions; then would they necessarily become pleasing and displeasing to God, in different respects: pleasing, when accompanied by such internal dispositions and actions; when disjoined from them, and rested in as meritorious, to the last degree, displeasing, hateful, and abominable. They are said to have been both the one and the other; and, therefore, were most indubitably figurative. To any considering person the thing speaks for itself.

But the Scriptures of the Old Testament did not leave a truth of such importance to be inferred. They have expressly declared it.

To instance in that rite, which was the discriminating and characteristic mark of the seed of Abraham, circumcision. Moses himself hath affirmed, that a spiritual or mental circumcision was intended;

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and that the end of that commandment was the love of God, out of a pure heart, and faith unfeigned. "Circumcise (says he) the foreskin of your hearts, "and be no more stiff-necked[m]." And again, "The "Lord thy God shall circumcise thy heart, and the "heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with "all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou "mayest live[n]." When a Jew, reading this, still continues to think that the legal rites were instituted for their own sake, and that their value lies in the *opus operatum*, is the veil on Moses' face, or on his heart? For hath not Moses told *him*, in terms as plain as those in which St. Paul hath told *us*, that "He is not a Jew, who is one outwardly, nor is "that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; "but he is a Jew, who is one inwardly; and cir-"cumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not "in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of "God[o]."

Thus, with regard to the many ablutions enjoined and practised under the law—"Wash you, make you "clean," saith God to his people, by the prophet Isaiah. So far the terms are legal, and may be deemed ambiguous; but, by what immediately follows, their meaning is explained and fixed: "Put "away the evil of your doings from before mine "eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well[p]." As if he had said, What avails the outward and visible sign, without the thing signified by it? When we read in

[m] Deut. x. 16.
[n] Deut. xxx. 6.
[o] Rom. ii. ult.
[p] Isa. i. 16, 17.

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the 51st Psalm, "Purge me with hyssop, and I "shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than "snow[q];" we may think we hear the voice of a Jew. But let us hear him again—"Wash me throughly "from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. "Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine "iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; "and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not "away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy "Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy "salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit[r]." What can a Christian—what can the devoutest and best-informed Christian, in the like unhappy circumstances, say more, than thus to pray, that God would by his mercy pardon the guilt, and efface the stain of sin, and renew the heart and soul again to righteousness, by the grace and power of his Holy Spirit? And whoever peruses with attention the writings of the prophets, will find, that it is always one part of their employment to recall the Israelites from the dead letter to the living spirit of their law; to press upon them the necessity of suing for the divine favour by that true repentance, and that steadfast faith in God's promises, in the exercise of which it was the design of their ritual to train them. The office of a Christian minister, *mutatis mutandis*, is, in this particular, the same: and it may be executed, with the utmost propriety, in the very same language. The noble and affecting exhortation in our Commination office affords a striking proof of this;

q Psal. li. 7. r Ver. 2, 9, et seq.

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where the prophetical and the evangelical expressions are finely interwoven, and, like the colours in a good picture, most harmoniously melt into each other.

To speak a word more, touching the *perpetuity* of the law of Moses. The Jew argues for it, from the immutability of God. But it is no more a reflection upon the divine immutability, that the law, having answered its end, should be abolished, than it is, that the world should be destroyed, after the accomplishment of the design for which it was created. He, who gave the law, foretold, in the clearest terms, by his prophets, that, at a certain period, it should cease; that he would make a new covenant by the Messias, and that the old covenant should be disannulled[s]; that the old things should pass away, and be forgottten[t]; that the ark of the covenant should come no more to mind[u]; that the legal sacrifices should cease, and sacrifices of a purer kind be established in their room[x]; that the Aaronical order of priesthood should be dissolved, and the order of Melchisedek be introduced by the Messiah; and that this latter priesthood should be an ordinance for ever[y].

From these considerations it appears, that the law, in its nature, was figurative and transitory, being a dispensation interposed between the promise and its accomplishment. Previous to the law, the Gospel

[s] Jer. xxxi. 31. [t] Isa. xliii. 18, 19. [u] Jer. iii. 16.
[x] Mal. i. 10. [y] Ps. cx. 4. See Paschal's Thoughts, p. 187.

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was preached to Abraham, that in his seed, the Messiah, all nations should be blessed. The same Gospel, at the beginning, had been preached to Adam, that the seed of the woman, or the Messiah, should bruise the head, that is, destroy the power, of the old serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, who deceived our first parents, and deceiveth the whole world. But as there was to be a long interval between the promise and its performance, in the mean time, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made, the law took men under its tuition, prescribed to them their duty, showed them their guilt and their pollution, and pointed out the means of pardon and sanctification. When the promise was fulfilled, and the seed came, it had executed its office, and ceased of course, giving place to him whom it had hitherto prefigured and predicted. It spoke by the mouth of the aged and dying Simeon, when, upon embracing the child Jesus in the temple, he exclaimed, "Lord now lettest "thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy "word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, "which thou hast prepared before the face of all "people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be "the glory of thy people Israel."

The *third* point, taken for granted by the Jews in our Saviour's time, was, that the possession of their city, temple, and country, in peace, wealth, and prosperity, was the end of the promises.

But their own Scriptures militate, with equal force, against this notion likewise.

For here we must recollect again, that *the* pro-

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mise, emphatically so styled, was made, in Abraham, to "all the nations of the earth," who could not possibly have any concern in the blessing of Canaan.

We must observe, that if Canaan were indeed the end of the promise, the fathers of the Jewish people, Abraham, Issac, and Jacob, never were, nor could hope to be, partakers of it. They sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange land. God gave them none inheritance in it, not so much as to set their foot on. They confessed themselves to be strangers and pilgrims, travelling towards a country in which they might fix their abode. Such they lived, and such they died. The country, therefore, which they sought, was one beyond the grave.

When the children of Abraham were settled in Canaan, true Israelites understood, that the rest they there enjoyed was by no means the real, permanent, final rest promised and intended. In the 95th Psalm, David, though king of Israel, and seated on the hill of Sion, still speaks of another future rest, warning the people of his time, that they fell not short of it, as their ancestors, who came out of Egypt, fell short of Canaan, through unbelief and disobedience. If Joshua had given them the true final rest, David so long afterward could not have spoken of another day of trial, and another rest reserved in store for the faithful. For this reason it is, that the same David, in that sublime and devout act of praise and thanksgiving uttered just before his death, recognising the mercies of God to Israel in the land of promise, yet makes the very confession

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which the ancient patriarchs had made, when they had none inheritance in that land: "We are "strangers before thee, our God, and sojourners, as "were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as "a shadow, and there is none abiding[z]."

If, therefore, the land of Canaan were not the true and final seat of rest, peace, and felicity for the people of God, we must conclude concerning that, as we did above concerning the law, that it terminated not in itself, nor was given for its own sake, but was also, in its kind, a figure for the time then present, of a glorious and permanent possession in a better world, where all those who live and die in the Lord, shall indeed rest from their labours. The Jews had sufficient grounds, from their own Scriptures, to consider it as such. They should have considered it as such; and they should have carried on their thoughts to the rest and the inheritance of the saints in light, whither their fathers were gone before them through faith in the promised seed, the Messiah, whose office it was, like another Joshua, by vanquishing the adverse powers, to open the kingdom of heaven, that true land of promise, to all believers.

The *fourth* position maintained by the Jews was, that the prophecies warranted them in the expectation of a Messiah, who, as a temporal prince, should secure them in their possessions, by subduing their civil enemies, and reigning over them in Judea.

The same prejudice which operated with regard to

[z] 1 Chron. xxix. 15.

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the family of Abraham, the law of Moses, and the land of promise, operated likewise with regard to the Messiah. This was but a natural and necessary consequence. For if they had fixed their thoughts on their national privileges, their ceremonies, and the inheritance of Canaan, the Messiah, by them desired, must needs be one, who would defend and preserve them in the enjoyment of those privileges, those ceremonies, and that inheritance. Accordingly, the notion current among the Jews when our Lord was upon earth, and which, we find, stuck fast to his disciples even after his resurrection, was, that Messiah, when he came, should "restore again the "kingdom to Israel[a]." And the grand argument insisted on in the Talmud, and by the Rabbins, is, that he did not subdue the nations by the force and terror of his arms. He overcame not the Gentiles, say they, with martial power; he loaded us not with their spoils: he neither enlarged our dominion nor increased our power[b].

Now the Scriptures do undoubtedly describe Messiah, as one who should deliver his people from their enemies, and reign over them in glorious majesty. The Jews construed those passages of a temporal deliverance from the Roman yoke, and a temporal reign in Palestine. But did they construe them aright? Do not the same Scriptures unfold the design of his coming, and the process of the redemption by him, in the fullest and most particular manner? Surely they do. How many passages are there,

[a] Acts, i. 6. [b] See Paschal, p. 170.

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always allowed by the ancient, and not now denied by the modern Jews, to belong to Messiah, which describe him as poor, lowly, despised, afflicted, oppressed, dying, dead! Would you now compose a man's character, without accounting for the contrarieties in it? Can you be said to have composed that of the Messiah, while you leave out one half of it? Are you not bound to find a person, in whom all the seemingly contradictory particulars are reconciled? They are easily, they are completely reconciled in the person of Jesus, as set forth, by us Christians, in his twofold nature, as God and man. They never were, they never will, they never can, be reconciled in any other: and the Jews, by their modern fiction of two different Messiahs, to answer the purpose, have at once justified us, and given sentence against themselves.

But that the force of the prophetical testimony in favour of the Messiahship of Jesus may appear at one view, permit me, in a concise and summary way, to recall the several particulars of it to your remembrance, as I find them collected by a very learned and eminent writer.

The prophets speak of a new and second covenant which God would make with his people: they mention, not once or twice, but very often, the conversion of the Gentiles from superstition and idolatry to the worship of the true God: they speak of four successive empires, the last of which was the Roman empire; and under this last empire, they say, that a new and everlasting kingdom should be established, by one to whom God should give absolute power and

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dominion. A great person was to come, who should be Immanuel, or God with us, the Son of God and the Son of man, the seed of Abraham and of David; born of a virgin, poor and obscure, and yet one whom David calls his Lord; the Lord to whom the temple belonged, the mighty God, a great King, and everlasting Priest, though not of the tribe of Levi; born at Bethlehem; a prophet like unto Moses, but greater than Moses; a prophet who should preach to the poor and meek, and proclaim liberty to the captives and comfort to the mourners, and heal the broken-hearted; who should proclaim his Gospel, first and principally, in the land of Zebulon and Napthali, in Galilee of the Gentiles; who should have a forerunner in the spirit of Elias, crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord; who should instruct in a mild and peaceable manner, without wrath and contention, before the destruction of the temple, in which temple he should be seen and heard; who should enter into Jerusalem meek and humble, and riding on an ass; who should work miracles more than Moses and all the prophets, and miracles of the merciful and beneficent kind, open the eyes of the blind and the ears of the deaf, and make the dumb to praise God, and the lame to leap as an hart; who, notwithstanding all his power and goodness, should be rejected by the greater part of the nation, to whom he should be a stumbling-block; who should be despised and afflicted, a man of sorrow, and cut off from the land of the living; who should have enemies numerous, powerful, crafty, and wicked; who should be accused by false wit-

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nesses, betrayed by an intimate and particular friend, sold for thirty pieces of silver, and the money given for a potter's field, when it had been flung away by the traitor, who should not live long after his crime, and whose office should be filled up by another; that the enemies of this blessed person should use him contumeliously, buffet him and spit upon him, while he should be led like a lamb to the slaughter, not opening his mouth, but to intercede for the transgressors; that his enemies should strip him of his raiment, divide it among themselves, and cast lots upon it, surround him, pierce his hands and his feet, mock him, and shake their heads at him, give him gall to eat and vinegar to drink; that he should be reduced to so weak and languishing a condition, that his bones might all be counted, his heart should melt within him, and his tongue cleave to the roof of his mouth; that he should be brought to the dust of death; that he should be pierced, and yet not one of his bones be broken; that he should be laid in the sepulchre of a rich and honourable man, none of his enemies hindering it; that he should rise again, before he had seen corruption, and subdue his enemies, and ascend into heaven, and sit at God's right hand, and be crowned with honour and glory, and see his seed, and prosper, and justify many, and be adored by kings and princes; that then Jerusalem should be made desolate, and the Jews dispersed in all lands, and the Gentiles should be converted, and flow into the church[c].

In the application of a single prophecy, especially

[c] Dr. Jortin's Remarks on Eccles. Hist. vol. i. p. 112.

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if it be a figurative one, interest and ingenuity may raise many doubts and difficulties; but against the accumulated weight of evidence, καθ' υπερβολην εις υπερβολην, afforded by so many plain literal predictions, all pointing to one person, all punctually and exactly fulfilled in Jesus Christ, and in him alone, no tolerably plausible objection can ever be made. Let candour and integrity, reason and common sense, be judges in the cause, and they must determine—they have already determined by the virtuous Nathanael —"Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the "King of Israel."

Such, then, is the case of the Jews, such the evidence they rejected, and such the cause of their rejecting it. Having fixed their eyes and their hopes upon the shadow, they set at naught the substance, though appearing at the time and in the manner described by their own prophets. Having rejected their God, they have been rejected by him; and the fatal errors, which occasioned their infidelity, have received a final and tremendous refutation, by the divine judgements inflicted upon them.

To demonstrate, that, as the seed of Abraham, they had no exclusive and indefeasible right to the favours of Heaven, those favours have been withdrawn from them, and conferred on the Gentiles.

To show that the law of Moses was not in itself efficacious, or designed to be perpetual, they are put under an absolute incapacity of observing it any more. They have no altar, no priest, no temple.

To reprove the fond notion, that Canaan was the end of the promises, they have been driven out of it,

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and forbidden to approach it. In a state of utter desolation, it has passed successively into the hands of their enemies of every denomination, and never reverted to them.

To eradicate the ideas of a temporal Messiah, and dominion over the nations, after beholding the sceptre departed from Judah, after having been deceived by a multitude of impostors, they continue to this hour, at the end of 1700 years, fugitives and vagabonds upon the earth.

And now, let us be permitted, in our turn, to address an argument to the deist upon this topic. You demand ocular proof of prophecy accomplished. It is before you, in an instance without a parallel. It was repeatedly foretold, both in the Old and New Testament, that, for the rejection and murder of their Messiah, the Jews should be dispersed into all countries; yet that they should not be swallowed up and lost among their conquerors, but should still subsist, to latest times, a distinct people. By Jeremiah, God declared he would make an end of the nations their oppressors, but he would not make an end of them[d]. You will not say, this prediction was written since the event; and certainly, an occurrence more singular or improbable could not have been predicted. In the course of human affairs, who hath heard such a thing? Yet, so it is. The mighty monarchies of Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome, are vanished, like the shadows of the evening, or the phantoms of the night. Their places know them no

[d] Jer. xxx. 11.



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more. Nothing remains of them but their names: while this little contemptible people, as you are wont to style the Jews, strangely secure, without a friend or protector, amidst the wreck of empires; oppressed, persecuted, harassed always, by edicts and executioners, by murders and massacres, hath outlived the very ruins of them all. Except you see signs and wonders, you will not believe. Behold then a sign and a wonder; the accomplishment of prophecy is a standing miracle; the *bush of Moses* surrounded by flames, ever burning, and never consumed! Contemplate the sight as it deserves; and be not faithless, but believing; for this is the Lord's doing, and therefore so marvellous in our eyes.

That the Gospel, when slighted by the Jews, might not be without its fruit, and that God might have a church and people to supply their place, the apostles turned to the Gentiles; so that *their* fall became the riches of the world, and good was brought out of evil. Let the warning given us by our own apostle be ever sounding in our ears, though, when we consider the state of religion among us, it may perhaps make them tingle. "Because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear; for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee[e]."

The cause of Jewish infidelity was a hatred of the power of godliness, concealed under the cloke of zeal for its form, and occasioned by a love of wealth,

[e] Rom. xi. 20, 21.

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power, and parade, a notion of privilege, pre-eminence, and indefectibility. And is it not astonishing, that with such an example before her eyes, the church of Rome should be pursuing the same course, and splitting upon the same rock? Let us be thankful, that we are come out of her; and let us guard against the shadow of her crime, by constantly bearing in mind, that the promises are spiritual, and that they are conditional; that if the light of the Gospel which is vouchsafed us, be abused, God can remove it; that, like the bright ruler of the day, it may proceed westward, and leave us in darkness; that he who converted Britons and Saxons, can call the tribes of America to the faith, and "of those stones raise "up children unto Abraham."

To conclude—When we see the Jews, for so great a length of time, preserved under calamities, which would have been long since the ruin of any other people, our regard and attention ought to be strongly excited towards them. Extraordinary was their beginning and their progress; more extraordinary, perhaps, will be their end; for if they abide not still in unbelief, they, as the natural branches, *may* surely be grafted in again: and there can be but little doubt, that such an event *will* take place. It is said, they are dispersed, "till the times of the "Gentiles shall be fulfilled[f];" and that "blindness "in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of "the Gentiles be come in[g]." It seems evidently to be implied, that at the period mentioned, whenever

[f] Luke, xxi. 24. [g] Rom. xi. 25.



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it shall come, their dispersion will cease, and their blindness be removed. Glorious things are spoken of them by their own prophets, which do not seem, as yet, to have received their full and proper accomplishment. When the Gentiles had revolted from the true religion, revealed after the fall, the church subsisted for two thousand years in the family of Abraham. Since the apostasy of the Jews, it hath subsisted nearly the same space of time among the Gentiles. And what saith St. Paul? "As ye in times "past have not believed God, yet have now obtained "mercy through their unbelief; even so have these "also now not believed, that through your mercy "they may also obtain mercy[h]." The very mercy shown to the Gentiles is to be a means of bringing the Jews to the faith: and perhaps we can no where meet with an instance of a more popular and affectionate turn, than that by which St. Paul seems to find a reason for their zeal to convert the Gentiles, in his love to his own countrymen the Jews, that he may thereby provoke them to emulation. Let us second his endeavours to effect this, by our love and our good works: let us, in our lives and conversations, show them a religion, whose attractive excellence may invite and compel them to embrace it. Nor let us omit to observe, that, as Gentiles, while we labour to promote their interest, we likewise shall, by so doing, promote our own. So signal an event as the conversion of the Jews, cannot but operate again on the lukewarm and degenerate nations, as

[h] Rom. xi. 30, 31.

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well as on those that are still unconverted, to the production of a more plentiful and joyful harvest than has yet perhaps been seen. "For if the fall of "them were the riches of the world, and the dimi-"nishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how "much more their fulness? If the casting away of "them were the reconciling of the world, what shall "the receiving of them be, but life from the dead[1]?" —the resurrection of Christianity, in all the splendor of truth, and the beauty of holiness!—Nor let us be staggered by the contrary appearances of things in the world. These cannot be more contrary than they were at the conversion of the Gentiles. From the Jewish church, when in its lowest and most unpromising state, went forth those who brought the nations to the faith; from the Gentile church, when in a condition equally low and unpromising, may go forth those who shall cause Israel to return to it—Blessed times! Delightful prospect!—We see it, but not now; we behold it, but, perhaps, not near. We live, and probably, like the ancient patriarchs, we may die, not having received the promises. But a generation to be born shall receive them, and shall praise the Lord, who thus, at different periods, "hath shut up all in unbelief, that he may" finally "have mercy upon all."—Happy, in the mean season, shall we be, if, while we are preparing ourselves, we may, in any the least degree, by our prayers and our endeavours, contribute towards the preparation of our elder brethren, the

[1] Rom. xi. 12, 15.

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once beloved and highly favoured seed of Abraham, for the approach of that awful and important day, when their and our Messiah, who, as at this time, came in humility to abase the proud, shall return in glory, to exalt the humble.

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# DISCOURSE IX.

## THE BELOVED DISCIPLE.

JOHN, XXI. 7.

*That disciple whom Jesus loved.*

No writings are better calculated to improve mankind, than those which relate the history of the lives of such persons as have been famous, in their generations, for wisdom and virtue. We are apt to be terrified by the strictness and severity of holiness, while it meets us only in precept; but when we behold it realized in the example of one made of the same flesh and blood, living in the same world, and exposed to the same temptations with ourselves, we are fired, at the sight, with a noble emulation, and are ashamed of any longer fancying ourselves not able to do what so many others have done before us. St. Augustine, in his Confessions, describing the conflicts he endured with temptation in his younger years, tells us how greatly he was strengthened and animated to the fight, by imagining he saw virtue standing, in a visible form before his eyes, and pointing to the noble company of those who had been conspicuous examples of purity; with

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which consideration she gently reproached him in these words—" Why canst not thou do what *these* " have done?" From the fair light of one good example, innumerable others may catch the heavenly flame, until the whole church become illuminated and adorned with bright and shining patterns of every thing that is lovely and praise-worthy.

Biography hath also another advantage, namely, that it is sure to *entertain*, because it gratifies that natural curiosity men have to be acquainted with the history of others; which curiosity is then directed to its proper end, when it incites us to make the wisdom and experience of past ages our own, in order to become proficients in the mystery of godliness, and to practise every art of virtuous living.

But what chiefly recommends this kind of writing to Christians is, the use made of it in the Holy Scriptures, which are, for the most part, *historical*, the wisdom of God having thought it better to set before us the duties of our calling, as they present themselves in the life of Christ and those of his saints, than to give us any regular and exact system of them. The church, by the appointment of her festivals, has contrived to turn our thoughts from time to time upon these lives; that so, neglect and forgetfulness may not deprive us of the many benefits resulting from a due contemplation of them.

The saint of this day is John the apostle and evangelist. And where will heraldry, among all her boasted titles of honour, find one that can stand in competition with that which was conferred upon him —" The disciple whom Jesus loved!" beloved of

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Him who was himself the beloved of his Father! Could we suppose a prince to reign universal monarch over all the kingdoms of the world, the sole fountain of every kind of earthly honour to every individual man under the whole heavens, how gladly, at the hour of death, would he resign all, to be the beloved disciple of such a Master. And if nothing be esteemed too high a price for the favour of an earthly sovereign, a man, whose breath is in his nostrils, what shall we not give to obtain the love of him who abideth for ever, and will make us partakers of his own immortality? We are all the disciples of Christ, and candidates for his favour. Let us, therefore, take a view of the life and character of the person who enjoyed so large a share of it, as to be styled eminently—"that disciple whom Jesus loved;" since, to be like him, is the way to be loved of our Master as he was.

St. John was the son of Zebedee and Salome; the same Salome whose pious care had provided spices to embalm the body of our Lord, when Mary Magdalen and she, coming early to the sepulchre, found him risen from the dead. The place of his birth was one of the sea-towns in Galilee, probably either Bethsaida or Capernaum; where, with his father Zebedee, and his elder brother James, afterwards distinguished from another of that name by the title of *St. James the Great*, he followed the fishing trade. Youth is no obstacle in the way of obtaining the favour of Christ. The disciple whom he loved was the youngest of all the apostles. And certain it is, that religion never appears to greater advantage, than in the persons of

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those who "remember their Creator in the days of "their youth," and are admitted early into the number of the disciples of the holy Jesus. It is then like a diamond set in gold. There is something more noble in renouncing the world for the love of Christ, when the relish for sensible enjoyments is at the highest, than there can be in doing it when the evil days come, in which there is no farther pleasure or satisfaction to be had in earthly things. He surely is not so likely to accomplish his journey, who begins it when the sun is going down, as he is who sets out at the hour of its rising. Youth, like the morning, is the proper season for every task that requires time and pains. Then all the powers of the body and soul are fresh and vigorous, as those of one awaked from a sound and kindly sleep. Then is the golden opportunity, the sweet hour of prime; and the day is before us. "The night cometh, when no man can work." "I "have written unto you, young men," saith John himself, "because ye are strong, and the word of "God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the "wicked one[a]." Rejoice then, O young man, in thy youth, not because thou art able to riot in excess and wantonness, as the Heathen who know not God, but because thou hast it in thy power to become, like the youthful John, the beloved of thy Master, who seeketh such to worship him.

Nor let him of low degree neglect to take comfort in the consideration, that the beloved disciple of Christ was a common *fisherman*. The distinctions of high

[a] 1 John, ii. 14.

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and low, rich and poor, noble and vulgar, obtain in this world, and in this world only. In the kingdom of God they cease, and are no more. There virtue only gives precedence, and the meanest mechanic takes place of the nobles and kings of the earth, if he were a better Christian than they were. The vanity and folly of those whose confidence is placed in titles and pedigrees, will then appear in its proper light, when the supposed carpenter's son shall be seen on his throne of glory, and the fisherman seated at his right hand.

The account of John being called, by our blessed Lord, from his employment of fishing, to that of preaching the Gospel, is thus given us, Matt. iv. 21. "And Jesus, going on from thence," that is, from the place where he had just before called Peter and Andrew, "saw other two brethren, James the son "of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with "Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he "called them. And they immediately left the ship, "and their father, and followed him." Their minds had been prepared for the advent of the Messiah by the sermons of the Baptist, who indeed had pointed him out to Andrew, and another disciple, not improbably John himself, for the Lamb of God. Upon his appearance and call, therefore, they readily received and obeyed him, laying the foundation of the Christian building in the renunciation of the world. And here it always must be laid by every one who is desirous of being "the disciple whom Jesus loveth." All are not called to forsake their occupations and to commence preachers, as the apostles were; Christ

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having appointed in his church a regular way of entering into the ministry; and at this door, when duly prepared for it by a suitable education, all are now to enter, who find themselves inclined and disposed by the good Spirit of God to undertake that blessed work. But every one is called to be ready, in heart and mind, to quit all that comes in competition with duty, and to follow the Saviour in the path of holy living. It is necessary for us all to leave those companies and engagements, and ways of living, which ensnare our souls, and entangle our affections in the toils of sin. And when duty to God requires it, we must forsake our friends and relations, rather than reject the salvation of Christ. Whoever is in error or in sin, will, by the good providence of God, be often called to come out of it in the course of his life. He shall, perhaps, hear a sermon, that shows him to himself, and awakens him; or some kind and charitable friend shall admonish him; or the Holy Spirit shall cause his own conscience to be his reprover. Then, O sinner, it is, that Jesus calleth *thee*. Obey him instantly; leave all that, whatever it be, whereby thou offendest, though near and dear to thee; join thyself to him, as thy master and director in all things; and thou, as well as St. John, shalt be beloved of him.

When our Lord gave his apostles their commission to preach the Gospel, he surnamed our evangelist and his brother James, *Boanerges*, that is, in our language, *Sons of thunder*. Thereby he intimated the powerful effects of their preaching that word, which is frequently compared to thunder; be-

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ing, like that, the voice of God speaking from heaven, mighty in its operation. If the one shake the earth, throw down lofty trees and towers, and, by the lightning which accompanieth it, dissolve the hardest substances, the other shaketh the empire of sin, casteth down every thing which exalted itself against heaven, blasting and consuming the corruption of the heart. Such are the effects of the word when preached with power; and happy are they who experience them, in reading and hearing the Gospels, and more especially that of St. John, who, on the wings of contemplation and faith, soaring aloft, like his own eagle, bears the thunder of the word, and causes its glorious voice to be heard under the whole heaven.

In the course of the evangelical history, we find St. John, in conjunction with St. Peter and St. James, admitted to the knowledge and view of some more private miracles and transactions, when the other apostles had not that honour. These were the three who attended their Master, when he raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead. "He suffered no man "to go in, save Peter, and James, and John." And this is, in some sense, the happy lot of every disciple whom Jesus loveth. For although he no more "know Christ after the flesh," or see him working his miracles in person, as St. John did; yet, by faith, the wonders of divine love and mercy are manifested unto him, and he beholds accomplished in himself and others that great work which the miracles of Christ were designed to represent, the work of conversion and salvation. This work Jesus only

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can effect; and none but his beloved disciples know and understand it. This secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he showeth to them the glory of his power in raising a soul from sin to righteousness, no less than he showed it to the apostles in raising the maid from death to life.

The same three disciples accompanied their Lord, exclusive of all the rest, at the two most remarkable scenes of his exaltation and humiliation; that is to say, when he was transfigured upon mount Tabor, and when he was in an agony in the garden of Gethsemane. With regard to the former we read, that "he took Peter, and James, and John, up into a "high mountain, apart, and was transfigured before "them." There they beheld his mortal body suddenly clothed with light, as with a garment; they beheld his glory, as the glory of the only begotten; they saw the Sun of Righteousness shining in his strength; they saw Moses and Elias glorified with him, as the law and the prophets always appear, when seen in company with Jesus; and they heard the voice from heaven declaring him to be the beloved of the Father. Again, at his passion, "he taketh with him Peter, "and the two sons of Zebedee, James and John, "and began to be sore amazed, and very heavy." Then they beheld him encompassed with the infirmities of a man, and beset by the powers of darkness; they beheld him humbled under the load of our sins; they saw the sun overcast with a cloud; and heard the same Divine Person praying in a bitter agony, as one smitten of God in his anger, and afflicted unto death. And happy is every disciple,

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whom Jesus so loveth, as to admit him, by faith, to behold and dwell upon the contemplation of his blessed Master, in these, his two states of exaltation and humiliation; the glory of his divine, and the sufferings of his human nature. These are subjects on which a man can never meditate, but with infinite profit and advantage. By ascending the holy mount, and there viewing, in the transfiguration of Jesus, the glory of his person, and an ensample of that glory which he shall bestow on his saints at the resurrection, he is armed against the pain and shame of the cross, and strengthened to undergo his portion of sufferings in the world. By attending his Redeemer in the garden, during his agony, he learns the intolerable punishments due to sin, and the amazing love of him who would descend from Tabor to Gethsemane, to bear them for sinners; he is prepared to take up his cross, and to be conformed to Christ in sufferings, from thence looking back to the glory which the Son of God left for a time, that he might bestow it on his beloved disciples for ever. Whosoever hath so digested in his heart these two subjects, as to be able to reduce the considerations on them to practice, hath attended his Master, with St. John, on the mount and in the garden.

Three times we hear in the Gospels the beloved disciple reproved by his Master, to show us that whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth and purgeth, till, like the branch of a well-dressed vine, he bring forth more and better fruit. Once, a spark of ambition, lighting upon the spirits of the two brothers, James

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and John, had suddenly inflamed them with a vehement desire of pre-eminence above their colleagues in the ministry: they wanted to "sit, one on his "right hand, and the other on his left, in his king-"dom." Our Lord gave them to understand, that they who were called to be his disciples and apostles, were called to do his work, to labour and to suffer for the service of the church and the salvation of souls, and should esteem it sufficient to be exalted, like their blessed Master, in heaven, after the work was done. Thus the two young candidates for promotion stood reproved. Made wiser by the instructions of their Lord, and the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them at the day of Pentecost, they thought no more of preceding their brethren, except in diligence and patience: they renounced self, preached the Gospel, suffered persecution, were crowned indeed, but it was with thorns; and thus, at length, in a far better sense, they obtained their wish, of sitting upon thrones with Christ in his kingdom.

At another time the two disciples James and John, not bearing to see their Lord rejected by the schismatical Samaritans, were for calling fire from heaven to consume them, after the example of the prophet Elijah. But Christ rebuked them, telling them, "they knew not what manner of spirit they were of; "for the Son of man was come to save the lives of "men, not to destroy them." The present is the day of grace and mercy, long-suffering and forbearance, with Christ; and it ought to be so with his disciples. The

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hour is coming, when, like Elijah, who represented him in his judicial capacity, he shall execute the vengeance written, and burn up his enemies on every side. But the time is not yet.

The third reproof St. John met with from his Master was likewise for an instance of indiscreet zeal, in forbidding a person to cast out devils in Christ's name, because he followed not them. "Forbid him "not," says Christ; "for there is no man which shall "do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil "of me. For he that is not against us, is on our "part. For whoever shall give you a cup of water "to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, "he shall not lose his reward[b]." No emulation or jealousy should prevent our encouraging every man to do good, though not in all points as we are, or could wish him to be. Whatever real good he does, it is God who does it in him, and in time that God may reveal all other things to him; towards which, we ourselves, by treating him with tenderness and kindness, may be made instrumental.

But these offences, upon Christ's admonitions, having been repented of and forsaken, they deprive not our apostle of the place he had obtained in his Lord's favour. For at the last supper we find him sitting next to Jesus, and, as the manner then was, reclining on his breast: as it is the privilege of the beloved disciple, when admitted to the supper of the Lamb, to pour out all his prayers and his complaints

[b] Mark, ix. 38.



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into the bosom of his Redeemer, who is always ready to hear, always mighty to save.

At the apprehension of Jesus, John fled with the rest, but quickly returning again, entered into the high priest's palace, and attended his blessed Master through every stage of his passion, till we behold him taking his station at the foot of the cross, where he is usually drawn in pictures of the crucifixion, with a countenance full of grief and love unutterable. From the cross Jesus commended his holy mother to the care of St. John, who from thenceforth, happy in an opportunity of showing his love to his Lord, as well as of entertaining such a guest, "took her to his "own home," where she continued till her death, treated by him with the duty and affection of a son. Let the disciple, then, who would show himself worthy the love of Christ, often contemplate and sympathize with his suffering Lord, placing himself, in imagination, at the foot of the cross, and looking with the eye of faith on him who was crucified thereon: let him abide by the persecuted truth and the afflicted servants of Jesus, in the hour of darkness and sorrow; and let him, for Christ's sake, and in obedience to his repeated injunctions, honour and show kindness to the church so long as he lives, and be a dutiful son to her.

Upon the first tidings of the resurrection, St. John, running with St. Peter, outran him, and came first to the sepulchre; as the soul, that has the love of Christ abiding in her, will always be foremost in quest of him.—It was St. John who discovered Jesus to St. Peter, when he appeared in the habit of a

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stranger, at the sea of Tiberias. "That disciple "whom Jesus loved saith to Peter, It is the Lord." He who loves Christ, will always know him when he comes in the disguise of a *stranger*, or a *poor man:* he will know, that *it is the Lord* who asks relief of him in their persons; and he will inform others of the same great truth.—It was concerning St. John that a report went among the disciples as if he was never to die, grounded by mistake on our Lord's answer to St. Peter's question—"Lord, what "shall this man do? If I will that he tarry till I "come, what is that to thee?" But, alas! St. John loved Christ too well, to think an exemption from death, for the sake of living in such a world as this, a thing to be desired. And whoever loves his Master as he did, will be of the same opinion:

After the effusion of the Spirit at the day of Pentecost, we read of John, in the character of an apostle, using his gifts for the good of mankind, healing the sick, preaching the Gospel, thrown into prison, and brought forth before the Jewish council, but still undaunted in bearing his testimony; herein leaving an example to his successors, the ministers of Christ, through all generations.

From the ecclesiastical histories we learn, that after preaching the Gospel, and founding many churches in Asia, he was sent bound from thence to Rome, at the command of the tyrant Domitian, who had him cast into a caldron of boiling oil. But the God, who preserved the three children in the midst of the fiery furnace, brought the apostle out of the



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caldron unhurt, to convince us, that nothing can harm "the disciple whom Jesus loveth." The emperor, however, not at all moved by this miraculous deliverance, banished the holy man to a wretched and comfortless island, called Patmos, where he saw heaven opened, and beheld those glorious visions recorded in the book of Revelation: as God often vouchsafes a larger portion of spiritual joys and comforts to his servants, when they are secluded from those of the world.

Upon the death of the emperor Domitian, many of his cruel edicts were revoked by his successor; when St. John, taking advantage of the indulgence, returned to Ephesus: and finding Timothy the bishop of that church martyred, he took upon himself the government of it, till, in a good old age of about a hundred years, he most willingly resigned his meek and gentle spirit into the hands of his Lord and Saviour, to experience the fulness of his love, and possess the glories he had so often contemplated.

These are the great outlines of St. John's life and character. But, after all, whoever would be thoroughly acquainted with him, in order to become like him, must survey and copy that fair picture which he hath drawn of himself in his divine writings, where we sometimes behold the lofty flights of the eagle, and at others hear the plaintive voice of the turtle; we behold him viewing and describing the glories of Christ in his Godhead and kingdom; we hear him relating the sweetly sorrowful and loving discourses of his dear Master, in his state of humi-

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liation. Let these holy books, therefore, be in our hands, until they have wrought their proper work in our hearts; that is to say, until, by believing the doctrines and practising the duties taught therein, we shall have learned to live the life of faith and charity. So shall we be Christians, in word and in deed; so shall we be "the disciples whom Jesus will "love."

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# DISCOURSE X.

## RACHEL COMFORTED.

JEREMIAH, XXXI. 15, 16, 17.

*Thus saith the* LORD; *A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rachel, weeping for her children, refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not. Thus saith the* LORD; *Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears; for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the* LORD; *and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. And there is hope in thine end, saith the* LORD, *that thy children shall come again to their own border.*

OF the events which befel the church of Israel in old time, many were by Providence ordained and disposed to be figurative of other events in the latter days, relative to the church Christian or universal. Let it be supposed for example, in the present instance, that the Babylonish captivity, and subsequent restoration, to which these words of Jeremiah relate, did, like the Egyptian bondage and the redemption therefrom, represent that more wretched, durable, and general captivity, in which mankind were detained by their grand enemy, with the resto-

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ration from it, which the Son of God, as at this season, was born to effect. And let us try, upon this plan, to show the beauty and propriety of the application which St. Matthew has made of the passage to the slaughter of the Bethlehemitish infants, and the lamentations of those who were thus bereaved of their children by the sword of Herod.

It is not easy, perhaps, to find a more judicious illustration of the case in hand, than the following one, given by the excellently learned Dr. Jackson, to whose most useful labours, on a curious and difficult subject, I must here, once for all, acknowledge myself indebted for the substance of what I am now about to lay before you.

"We know," says this able divine, "that a map, "though in itself a thousand times less than the least "parcel of enclosed ground, may represent the exact "form or proportion of the country whose name it "bears, though that be ten thousand times bigger "than the largest field that our eyes can look upon. "And thus hath the wisdom of God, under the same "words and phrases, included two deliverances, of "which the one is a map to the other. He, therefore, who should deny passages to be literally meant "of the deliverance of Judah and Benjamin from "Babylon, because they are only fulfilled in our deliverance by Christ, will give the Jew no small "advantage; he will commit as great an oversight, "as if an heir, possessed of a goodly estate, should "burn the map or terrar of it, which his ancestors "had truly taken for the benefit of their successors, "if they should know how to use it, when any con-

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" troversy should arise concerning the bounds or ex-
" tent of their inheritance. The Jew, on the con-
" trary, in denying these places to be meant of Christ
" and us, because they have been literally verified
" of the deliverance of his fathers by Zorobabel, and
" Joshua the priest, is like a man distracted, who
" boasts he hath a goodly heritage, because he can
" show the map or engrossed terrar of those lands
" of which the law has deprived him, since he knew
" not how to use them aright."

In the prosecution of this design, permit me in the

First place, to collect and present to you the historical circumstances concerning the person introduced by Jeremiah, as making lamentation over her children, and the occasion of her so doing, with the prophet's consolatory address to her, upon that occasion: after which we shall be prepared, in the

Second place, to take a view of those parallel circumstances, which offer themselves in the lamentation made by the Bethlehemitish mothers, and the cause thereof, with the consideration which was to administer comfort to *them*, in the day of their great and bitter affliction.

The mournful scene is laid by Jeremiah in Ramah, a city belonging to the tribe of Benjamin, of which tribe, it may be observed, the prophet himself was a member, as we learn from the first verse in his book: " The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the " priests that were in Anathoth, in the land of Ben-

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"jamin." The person introduced by him, as making lamentations, is Rachel, the beloved wife of Jacob, and the mother of that tribe. She had before born Joseph, at which time, by divine instinct, with allusion to the name just imposed, she said—"The Lord shall *add* to me another son." In childbirth, however, through the prevalence of her pains, she was induced to give up her former hopes of a second son for lost. Her attendant endeavoured to comfort her with her own prediction: "Fear not, for thou shalt have this son also." Yet, "when her soul was in departing (for she died!)"—never surely was there a more affecting parenthesis—"when her soul was in departing (for she died!) "she called his name *Benoni*," that is, *the son of my sorrow*. "His father," seeking to avert the omen with speed, "called him Benjamin," or, *the son of the right hand*, that is, of power and glory.

*Heu nunquam vana parentum auguria*—the observation of a heathen poet, is found more particularly verified in the history of the patriarchs, because among them there was often a foresight more than human, and the prospect into futurity was opened to them by a light from above. The different fates of the tribe of Benjamin seemed to have answered the different names imposed at the birth of its founder, by father and mother. No tribe more various than that; none more afflicted with disasters and calamities. At one time slaughtered by its fellow tribe, almost to excision, a true *Benoni* to Rachel, who, had she been alive, must have "wept for her children, with an ex-

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"ceeding bitter weeping;" at another, restored to populousness and prosperity, placed, as it were, at the head of the rest, furnishing the first king, who ruled God's people Israel, and realizing the name and character of *Benjamin*, the *son of the right hand.*

Upon the revolt of the ten tribes, Benjamin adhered to Judah, then the royal tribe, the tribe that gave birth to David, the tribe from which, in the fulness of time, a greater than David was to descend. When Jeremiah uttered the words now under our consideration, Judah was closely besieged in Jerusalem by the Chaldean army, in whose way thither the land of Benjamin lay. It experienced, therefore, of course, all the horrors of invasion. It was miserably wasted, and its inhabitants were carried away into captivity. This is the reason why old Rachel still renews her former complaint, and will not be persuaded, but that Benjamin must still be *Benoni.* She and her daughters (for under the name of Rachel we must comprehend all the woful mothers of that tribe) fill the heavens with their outcries, whilst their children are forced from their embraces into miserable bondage in Babylon. And though mention be only made of Ramah, a city of Benjamin, yet must we imagine the wailings to have been as loud and bitter about Bethlehem, which, though in the tribe of Judah, was upon the borders of Benjamin, and near unto the place where Rachel died; as we read in Genesis: "Rachel died, and "was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is *Beth-* "*lehem*; and Jacob set a pillar upon her grave, unto

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"this day[a]." Such was "the voice heard" in the days of Jeremiah, the "lamentation, and the bitter "weeping;" when "Rachel," as the general mother, and representative of all the mothers in the tribe, "weeping for her children, refused to be comforted, "because they were not." As a people, they had no civil existence. They were in that sense lost; they were dead; they were gone into captivity.

It was under these circumstances, that the prophet addressed the disconsolate mother—considering him as a *Benjamite*, we may say, *his* disconsolate mother—"Thus saith the Lord, Refrain thy voice "from weeping, and thine eyes from tears; for thy "work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord, and they "shall come again from the land of the enemy; and "there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that "thy children shall come again to their own border." As if he had said, in other words—

—Remember, O Rachel, my mother, the days that are past, and call to mind God's wonders of old time. Remember how thou sorrowedst, when thou broughtest forth my father Benjamin, as fearing lest he should have died with thee, or before thee. Yet after thy pains hadst thou this joy, that a man was born into the world. And though thou didst impose upon him a name betokening sorrow, yet his father wisely changed it into one predictive of better things. Remember, when Benjamin, for the good of his brethren, was called to go down into Egypt, how Jacob supposed him lost, and complained that

[a] Gen. xxxv. 19.

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he was bereaved of his children. But, notwithstanding these ill bodings, Benjamin, at length, returned in safety, with his brother Judah; the father was again blessed with the sight of his youngest and best beloved son, the light of his eyes, and the staff of his old age. Such, at this time, my mother, is thy fear and sorrow; but greater, hereafter, shall be thy comfort and thy joy. Benjamin is indeed led captive into Babylon; but *Judah* is once more gone with him, as his pledge: and if he bring him not back again, let the blame be his, yea mine, yea God's, for ever. "For thus saith the Lord, If my covenant "be not with day and night, and if I have not ap-"pointed the ordinances of heaven and earth, then "will I cast away the seed of Jacob and David my "servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to "be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and "Jacob—for I will cause their captivity to return, "and have mercy on them—yea I have sworn by "my holiness that I will not fail David." Now, my mother, while this promise lasts, in general, to Israel, as Abraham's seed, Benjamin must have his portion in the blessing. And while it remains good in particular to the seed of David, Benjamin, for his faithful adherence to Judah, in prosperity and adversity, must participate with him in the prerogative. And when the kingdom shall be restored, as restored it will be, whoever shall sit on the left hand, faithful Benjamin must sit on the right hand of the throne of David——

This, taking all circumstances into the account, seems to have been the import of Jeremiah's conso-

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latory address to Rachel, in the day of her calamity. And his words, or rather those of the Almighty, were in the fullest import made good to her. Within seventy years, it came to pass that the posterity of Benjamin returned, with Judah, into the land of promise, and inhabited Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and other bordering cities, promiscuously with the royal tribe. "Her work was rewarded;" her patient expectation, in faith and hope of the promises made her, failed not of its fruit, in the appointed season: her "children came again from the land "of the enemy to their own border," as the Lord had foretold by his prophet; they "returned, and "came to Sion with songs; joy was upon their heads," and in their hearts; "and sorrow and sigh-"ing flew away!"

We are now prepared to take a view, as was proposed in the

Second place, of those parallel circumstances which offer themselves, in the lamentation of the Bethlehemitish mothers, and the cause thereof, with the consideration which was to administer comfort to *them* in the day of their great and most bitter affliction.

The death of the tribe of Benjamin, in conjunction with the tribe of Judah, in the time of Jeremiah, was a civil death, a departure into captivity. Their restoration from it was, consequently, a civil restoration, a restoration to their ancient city and polity in their own land. The death of the Bethlehemitish infants was a bodily death, by the sword of Herod; their restoration must therefore be a restoration to the bodily life, thus violently taken from them, that is, it must be a resurrection. Rachel's present la-

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mentation for the bodily death of her children must have a comfort answerable to it, as her former lamentation for their civil death had a comfort answerable to *that*. Let us see what analogy and proportion the sorrow and joy in one case bear to the sorrow and joy in the other.

There is no need to shock your feelings, by endeavouring to draw a picture at large of this day's most abominable massacre. Suffice it to say, that the bloody murder of children in the tenderest and most helpless estate, torn from the arms, and butchered in such multitudes before the eyes of their mothers, must again cause "a voice to be heard, "lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning;" great, beyond the conception of any, but those who then experienced, or were witnesses to it. We cannot read the words which describe it, without imagining that we hear Rachel, called from her tomb near Bethlehem, "weeping for her children;" that we see her turning away, and "refusing to be comforted "for her children, because they were not;" because they were departed hence, and were no more to be found in the land of the living: they were led away into that other captivity, more wretched and durable than the captivity of Benjamin with Judah in Babylon: they were deprived of light and life; they were hurried from the warm and cheerful precincts of day, to be imprisoned in the cold and dark dominions of the king of terrors. And who can bring them from thence? Not the high priest Joshua, the son of Josedek; not Zorobabel, who conducted their fathers from captivity; not Samson, though, in the prime of his strength, he carried away the gates

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of Gaza; not David, nor their father Benjamin, though both had been alive to command or lead the whole posterity of Israel. All these might have said of the sons of Rachel this day commemorated by us, as David did of his child—"We shall go to them, "but they shall not return to us."—But the holiest of the ancient priests and prophets, the mightiest among the ancient kings and rulers, were still subject to death, and had taken their last repose with the beggar in the dust. Where, then, is the wonted promise of Rachel's reward? Who shall comfort her in this calamity?

Nothing, certainly, can wear a more gloomy and comfortless aspect, than things here seem to do. Yet in this, as in the former instance, "Thus saith the "Lord" to the mourner—and who else can say it? "Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes "from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith "the Lord, and they shall come again from the land "of the enemy; and there is hope in thine end, saith "the Lord, that thy children shall come again to "their own border."

Recollecting what hath been said above, and bearing in mind the circumstances of time and place, pointed out in the application made of the former part of the passage by St. Matthew, we may suppose this latter part to speak to the Bethlehemitish mothers, in some such manner as the following——

At Bethlehem, the birth-place of Benjamin, where the pillar was erected over Rachel's grave, a child is born, who has caused the children of Benjamin and Judah once more to become *Benoni's* true *sons of*

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*sorrow* to their mothers; a character he himself is to sustain on earth, insomuch, that "a sword shall "pierce through the soul" of her that bare him. As the seed of the woman, and with regard to the nature derived from her, he is to be "a man of sorrows "and acquainted with grief." But, like *Benjamin*, from his Father he shall receive a name expressive of far different things; "a name above every name;" he shall be exalted from misery and mortality to "the *right hand* of the Majesty in the heavens;" there to take possession of an inheritance in the true land of promise. Of this his inheritance in a state of power and glory, he will not fail to make those partakers, whose blood has been shed by the executioners of Herod on his account. Look upon this their final deliverance and restoration, as it is delineated in that map, or chart of it, the deliverance of your ancestors from the Babylonish captivity, and the restoration to their own land. Call to mind what was said by them, at that time, on the ground of their own happy experience—"They that sow in tears "shall reap in joy; he that goeth forth and weepeth," as if, ignorant of the art of husbandry, he feared the corn he was sowing would perish in the earth, "shall "doubtless come again with joy, bringing his sheaves "with him." The heavens, echoing with your cries, and the earth moistened with your tears, are witnesses to men and angels, that you have more plentifully sowed in grief than your ancestors. As the sorrows of your seed-time have abounded, so the joys of your harvest shall super-abound. The Lord's promise of old is not yet expired, but extends in full

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force to you and yours. With what more precious seed could the land of Judah and Benjamin be sown, than the blood of tender infants, harmless and undefiled even in thought? Scattered upon the ground by cruel hands, it shall be gathered by the power of Him who dispenseth the breath of life to all things living. None of this seed shall be lost, or prove unfruitful. Every grain shall produce its ear, and every ear its proportion of incorruptible and pleasant fruit. Great, therefore, as your affliction is allowed to be, yet mourn not as they that have no hope, but even in the midst of your bitter complaints, still remember, that Rachel's pains must have a joyful recompense, and her exceeding sorrows portend extraordinary comforts in the issue. Only let patience have its perfect work through faith, and that "work shall be re-"warded" with the possession of the promises. For, through the Saviour who is born, "there is hope in "the end," that, like as your fathers, in God's good time, "came again from the land of the enemy to "their own border," so your children, whose untimely excision you lament, shall come again from the strong holds of the grave, whither they had been led away captive, to the lot of their inheritance in the heavenly Canaan and the new Jerusalem, there to live and reign with him, for whom they have now suffered and died. *These* children of Judah and Benjamin, like their progenitors, "shall return, and "come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy shall "be upon their heads; they," and you with them, "shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and "sighing shall again flee away."



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The words thus explained, will suggest to us some useful reflections, suitable to the festival, on the case of the slaughtered *infants*, and that of the lamenting *mothers*.

With regard to the *infants*, we may observe the choice, made by the church, of proper persons to attend the blessed Jesus, upon the commemoration of his birth. These are St. Stephen, St. John, and the Innocents. He was born to suffer; and, therefore, the festival of his nativity is immediately followed by the festivals of those who suffered for him. St. Stephen was a martyr, and the first martyr, both in will and in deed: St. John, the beloved disciple, was such in will, but not in deed, being miraculously preserved from the death intended for him by Domitian. The Innocents were martyrs in deed, but not in will, by reason of their tender age.

Of these last, however, it pleased the Prince of martyrs to have his train composed, when he made his entry into the world, as at this season; a train of infants, suited to an infant Saviour; a train of Innocents, meet to follow the spotless Lamb, who came to convince the world of sin, and to redeem it in righteousness. They were the first-fruits offered to the Son of God, after his incarnation, and their blood the first that flowed on his account. They appeared as so many champions in the field, clad in the King's coat of armour, to intercept the blows directed against him.

The Christian poet, Prudentius, in one of his hymns, has an elegant and beautiful address to these young sufferers for their Redeemer—

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Salvete, flores Martyrum,
Quos, lucis ipso in limine,
Christi insecutor sustulit,
Ceu turbo nascentes rosas.
Vos, prima Christi victima,
Grex immolatorum tener,
Aram ante ipsam, simplices,
Palma et coronis luditis.

"Hail, ye first flowers of the evangelical spring, cut "off by the sword of persecution, ere yet you had "unfolded your leaves to the morning, as the early "rose droops before the withering blast. Driven, "like a flock of lambs, to the slaughter, you have "the honour to compose the first sacrifice offered at "the altar of Christ; before which, methinks, I see "your innocent simplicity sporting with the palms "and the crowns held out to you from above.

So remarkable an event necessarily attracts our attention to that age which is proposed by our Lord as, in many respects, a model for us all to copy, in forming our tempers and dispositions. "They "brought young children to Christ, that he should "touch them, and his disciples rebuked those that "brought them. But Jesus was much displeased, "and said, Suffer little children to come to me, and "forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God." And again, when the disciples "asked him, who "should be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, "he took a little child, and set him in the midst, and "said, Except ye be converted and become as little "children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of



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"God." To be fit for the inheritance of the saints in light, we must put off the passions which are too apt to infest us as *men*, ambition, pride, craft, envy, hatred, malice, anger, revenge, covetousness, and concupiscence of every sort, and put on their opposites, humility, meekness, modesty, charity, purity, simplicity; we must become such in heart and mind, by the discipline of religion, as little children are by their age; possessed of the same unlimited confidence in the care of a Father, who, as we are assured, careth for us; looking up to him for all we want, and flying to him for protection from all we fear; never entertaining a suspicion of our being forsaken or neglected by him, nor the least inclination to resist his will; equally insensible to the promises and threatenings of the world; resigned to suffer, and not afraid to die, when we are called so to do; able to smile at the drawn dagger, and ready to embrace the arm that aims it at our heart.

This idea of a child of God was daily realized, to the admiration of the whole Pagan world, in the first ages of the church. The same inexhaustible and all-powerful grace will realize it in these latter days, when religion shall be considered by us as an art, rather than a science; when *Non magna loquimur, sed vivimus*, shall be the device adopted by the Christian philosopher; and the precepts of the Gospel shall be practised with as much diligence as that with which its evidences are studied.

And lo, for our encouragement, in the portion of Scripture this day appointed for the Epistle, the veil is rent which separates the two worlds; the prospect

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is opened into another system; the "holiest of all" is disclosed; the celestial mount is discovered; and on its summit "we see a Lamb stand, with an hun-"dred and forty-four thousand" of the like sweet and innocent disposition, "having his Father's name "written on their foreheads. These are they which "follow the Lamb, whithersoever he goeth. These "were redeemed from among men, being the first-"fruits unto God and the Lamb. And in their "mouth was found no guile, for they were without "fault before the throne of God." From their station they beckon us after them, showing us, for our instruction and direction in the way, that "of such "is the kingdom of heaven."

And now we are ready, perhaps, to say with St. Peter, on an occasion somewhat similar, "It is good for us to be here!" Let us make our abode on the mount! But the time is not yet. We must return, and conclude, as we began, with the lamenting *mothers*, whom we left behind us in the valley of tears.

Their cries, like those of Rachel, portending the birth of a *Benoni*, a *son of sorrow*, teach us, his disciples, to expect sorrow for our portion in this life, and to look forward to another for comfort and joy.

In the world, as in Ramah, "a voice is heard, "lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning." Earthly possessions and satisfactions of every sort are, by their nature, transient. They *may* leave us; we *must* leave them. To him who views them, in their most settled state, with the eye of wisdom, they appear, as the air in the calmest day does to the

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philosopher through his telescope, ever undulating and fluctuating. If we place our happiness in them, we build upon the wave. It rolls from under us, and we sink into the depths of grief and despondency.

Children, relations, friends, honours, houses, lands, revenues, and endowments, the goods of nature and of fortune, nay, even of grace itself, are only *lent*. It is our misfortune to fancy they are *given*. We start therefore, and are angry, when the loan is called in. We think ourselves *masters*, when we are but *stewards;* and forget, that to each of us will it one day be said, "Give an account of thy stewardship, for "thou must be no longer steward."

Youth dreams of joys unremitted and pleasures uninterrupted; and sees not, in the charming perspective, the cross accidents that lie in wait to prevent their being so. But should no such accidents for a while intervene, to disturb the pleasing vision, age will certainly awake, and find it at an end. The sithe of time will be as effectual, though not so expeditious, as the sword of the persecutor; and without a Herod, Rachel, if she live long, will be heard lamenting; she will experience sorrows, in which the world can administer no adequate comfort. She must therefore look beyond it.

The patriarchs and people of God, in old time, were often delivered from adversity. They often enjoyed prosperity. But after all the wonders wrought for them, and all the blessings conferred upon them, the issue of things was still the same. These friends and favourites of Heaven still saw their relations, fre-

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quently their children, falling around them, and at length dropped, themselves, into the grave, to be mourned over by those that survived them. This was the case even in the land of promise itself. Deplorable indeed, therefore, and desperate, like the worst of the Heathen, would have been their condition, had they not been taught, through temporal deliverances and temporal prosperity, in a temporal land of promise, to contemplate another deliverance from the power of the destroyer, another prosperity that should have no end, in another land of promise, which should never be taken from them, and from which they should never be taken; where they, their parents and their children, should meet again, to part no more. What else is "the hope of "Israel?" what else can it be, but a "resurrection "from the dead[b]?"

Nothing can be plainer than the words of the apostle on this subject. Having enumerated the ancient worthies, from Abel to David and the succeeding prophets, he thus concludes: "These all, hav-"ing obtained a good report through faith, received "not the promise[c]," THE promise, emphatically, the grand promise, in faith of which they died, and of which all other promises were only shadows, and known by them to be such; "God having" all along foreseen and "provided some better thing for us;" better than any of those figurative promises which they did receive; to wit, an eternal redemption and an

[b] Acts, xxiv. 15. xxvi. 6. xxviii. 20.

[c] Την ευαγγελιαν.

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eternal inheritance, "that they, without us, should "not be made perfect[d]," as God intends that we, together with them, at the general resurrection, shall be made perfect in heaven.

If, then, the mothers in Judah and Benjamin had been properly instructed in the faith of the ancient church, when Jeremiah addressed to them the words we have been considering, though they must understand them immediately as a promise that their children should be delivered from Babylon, and brought back again to their own land; yet their thoughts would naturally be carried on, for further comfort, to that other deliverance and restoration from death, promised by all the holy prophets since the world began; even as we may presume the thoughts of a Christian parent would now be, whose son was a slave in Barbary, should a prophet be sent to him with the following message from God: "Your son "is gone into captivity, but he shall certainly be re-"deemed from it."

This, however, is indisputable; that, in the application which St. Matthew has taught us to make of the passage, it can admit of no other construction; because there can be no deliverance from bodily death, but by a bodily resurrection.

Learn we, therefore, and a more important and useful lesson cannot be learned—whenever death deprives us of those who are near and dear to us, to comfort ourselves and one another with these words; and let each of us, as occasion for consolation shall

[d] Heb. xi. 40.

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offer itself, listen to Jeremiah's prophecy, as if it were spoken to himself: "Thus saith the Lord; "Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes "from tears; for thy work shall be rewarded, saith "the Lord, and they shall come again from the "land of the enemy. And there is hope in thine "end, saith the Lord, that thy children," thy relations, or thy friends, "shall come again to their "own border;" that from the dark and desolate regions of the grave they shall come to the light and glory of the heavenly Jerusalem; where, as holy John tells us, "there shall be no more death, neither "sorrow, nor crying[e];" where Rachel shall finally cease her lamentations, lay aside her mourning veil, and wipe away all tears for ever from her eyes.

[e] Rev. xxi. 4.

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# DISCOURSE XI.

## THE CIRCUMCISION.

LUKE, II. 21.

*And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called* JESUS, *which was so named of the angel, before he was conceived in the womb.*

THESE words conclude the Gospel for the day, taken from a chapter which hath afforded ample matter of wonder and delight through the course of the present joyful season, when the church, like the blessed Virgin Mother, is never seen, but with the holy child in her arms. By the portions already selected from it, we have been made to listen to the sermon preached by an angel upon the subject of the Nativity; and the sweet notes of that anthem, sung by the choir of heaven immediately after, are still sounding in our ears. With the happy and obedient shepherds we have been at Bethlehem, and there have seen "this great thing which is come to pass, "which the Lord hath made known unto us;" and have found reason to return, like them, "glorifying "and praising God for all the things that we have

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"heard and seen, as it was told unto us." Nor shall we ever forget, it is to be hoped (at least, never, at this hallowed and gracious time), to imitate her example, who "kept all these sayings, and pon-"dered them in her heart."

We are now conducted from the birth to the circumcision of our Redeemer, an account of which immediately follows the history of the shepherds, in the words of the text. And very meet, and right, and our bounden duty it is, that we should at this time, and in this place, employ our thoughts upon it; seeing it was the beginning of sorrows to the Son of God, and the beginning of joy, because the beginning of redemption, to the sons of men, for whom the first blood of the all-propitiating victim was now shed. A stumbling-block it may prove to the Jew, foolishness it may appear to the Greek, and to all those, who, like the one, desire a *sign* of earthly splendour and magnificence; or, like the other, seek after the *wisdom* of false philosophy: but to the intelligent, and therefore humble believer, Christ, in this state of weakness, pain, and sorrow, is "the "wisdom of God" to contrive, "and the power of "God" to effect the deliverance of his people.

It is observable, that whensoever, in the Scriptures, mention is made of any particular relative to the abasement, the infirmity, and the shame submitted to by Christ, it is presently contrasted by something concerning his exaltation, his power, and his glory; that so, the objection arising in the mind from a view of the former, may be obviated at once by the consideration of the latter, and the Christian

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may never lose sight of that capital article of his faith, the union of the two natures, divine and human, in the person of his Saviour. Thus we behold him in swaddling-clothes; but instantly we hear the heavenly host singing an hallelujah to him. He lies in a manger; but the brightest star in the firmament points the way to his abode. He expires upon the cross; but all nature suffers with him, almost to a dissolution. And thus, in the instance now before us, he is circumcised indeed on earth, as the son of Abraham; but a name is given him from heaven, as the Son of God. For in these lowly and ignominious circumstances, he receives the name enjoined before to be imposed on him by the angel; a name above every name; a name which evil spirits fear, and good ones adore; a name, at which every knee should rejoice to bow, and which every tongue should exult to confess; since it is by this name that glory is given to God in the highest, peace restored to earth at war with its Maker, and good-will streams forth to sinful men.

In order to unfold the mystery of the circumcision of Christ, it will be necessary to inquire into the institution of this rite, with the reason and end thereof. "Moses," saith our Lord to the Jews, "gave you "circumcision, not because it is of Moses, but of the "fathers[a];" this being one of the many legal ceremonies, which were originally communicated to the ancient patriarchs, and afterwards re-ordained in writing by Moses. The first account of it occurs in

[a] John, vii. 22.

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the history of our father Abraham; and St. Paul, discoursing at large upon the point[b], informeth us, that it was given as a "sign or seal of the righteous-"ness, which is by faith." Now the object of Abraham's faith was redemption by the promised Seed, that is to say, by Messiah, who should spring from his loins; and in whom, by reason of that redemption, "all the nations of the earth were to be blessed" with the blessings of eternity. And the *righteousness*, which is by such faith, consisteth in the justification of believers by the cutting off and doing away the body of sin through the sacrifice of Christ by which they are pardoned and made holy, being separated from sin, and sin from them, in order to a final separation from every thing that offendeth, at the resurrection of the just. This is "the righteousness of "faith," with which Abraham having been before invested, he received circumcision, not as any thing which could make him righteous, but as a *sign* and *seal* of that evangelical righteousness "which he "had being yet uncircumcised; to the end that he "might be the father of all them who believe, though "they be not circumcised;" and that we Gentiles, as well as the Jews, might become the children, and inherit the blessing, of Abraham. But from the institution of this rite to the manifestation of the promised Seed, it became to the natural descendants of the patriarch Abraham, what baptism hath been ever since to the spiritual progeny of him who is, in a much higher sense, *the Father of us all;* it be-

[b] Rom. iv.

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came the sacrament of initiation into the true church and faith. Now, in a sacrament, the outward and visible sign is intended to introduce us to the inward and spiritual grace figured by it as a *sign*, conveyed by it as a *means*, and ensured by it as a *pledge*. And what the inward and spiritual grace signified by circumcision was, not only St. Paul, but Moses himself will tell us, who in the book of Deuteronomy expresseth himself in these terms; "Circumcise "the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-"necked[c]." And again; "The Lord thy God will "circumcise thine heart and the heart of thy seed, "to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and "with all thy soul, that thou mayest live[d]." From these passages laid together, the following truths seem to be fairly deducible; namely, First, That circumcision was an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace to be wrought in the *heart:* Secondly, That this inward and spiritual grace was the cutting off and casting away of *sin:* Thirdly, That for this work they were not sufficient as of themselves, but their sufficiency was of *the Lord their God*, who would work in them, and with them, through faith, by the Holy Spirit: Fourthly, That the effect and consequence of this spiritual circumcision would be the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, with its genuine fruit of unfeigned obedience to his commandments: And, lastly, That this would prepare the way to eternal life: "that thou mayest "LIVE," saith Moses; "that thou mayest live,"

[c] Deut. x. 16. [d] Deut. xxx. 6.

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not only on earth, under grace, but hereafter in glory: since "purification of the heart" is in order to a better life in that celestial Canaan, the ultimate end of all the promises, that good land which the Lord our God shall give to every Israelite indeed, and in which he himself, after having been the "shield" of Abraham and his seed, shall be their "exceeding great reward[e]." And so it is written, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see "God[f]." Thus do these two texts from the writings of Moses involve in them the substance of the Gospel; they begin with the cleansing of the heart from sin, thence proceeding on to the love of God, till they terminate in the beatific vision of him in an endless life. And could the Jews have read their law, without that veil which infidelity had drawn over the eyes of their understanding; could they have beheld, with open face, the glory of the Lord, enshrined in the Mosaic mysteries; could they have discerned the "apple of gold" through the "network of sil-"ver[g];" instead of mistaking the casket for the jewel which it contained and preserved, they had then saved an apostle the trouble of informing them, that "he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly, nor "is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; "but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly, and cir-"cumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and "not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but "of God[h]."

[e] Gen. xv. 1.
[f] Matth. v. 8.
[g] Prov. xxv. 11.
[h] Rom. ii. 28.

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We will venture then to suppose, that the institution of the rite now before us, with the reason and end thereof, is sufficiently cleared, and circumcision proved to be a sacramental sign of the cutting off and casting away of sin from the heart. But what mean ye then, as saith St. Bernard, by circumcising the child Jesus, who did no sin, and knew none; who was conceived in the womb of a virgin, by the Spirit of eternal purity? why must he undergo this painful ceremony? To this we answer, besides the example of humility and obedience herein afforded us by our Lord; as also the proof from hence resulting of the reality of his human nature; besides these collateral considerations, I say, the reason why Christ was, as on this day, circumcised, is the same reason why he was born, why he lived, and why he died. What he did, and what he suffered, he did and suffered not for himself, but for us. The whole of this momentous and salutary truth is expressed by the apostle in those few words: "He was made sin for us, who "knew no sin, that we might become the righteous-"ness of God in him[1]." He bore our griefs, that we might enter into his joy: he put on the bloody garment of sin and death, that we might be invested with the white and spotless robes of righteousness and life. He became not only one *with* us, as the head is with the members; but one *for* us, or in our *stead*, as a surety is for a debtor. And therefore, though, as the all-perfect Son of God, he could need neither circumcision nor baptism, yet, as the suffering re-

[1] 2 Cor. v. 21.

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presentative of fallen human nature, he submitted to both with the same view, namely, "to fulfil all "righteousness." This was the argument he used to John in the case of his baptism, and it holdeth equally in that of his circumcision. For having once undertaken to appear as our surety and substitute, it became incumbent on him "to fulfil all righteous-"ness," to perform what we should have performed, and to suffer for what we did not perform. As the children, therefore, were compounded of flesh and blood, he partook of the same; he was "made of "a woman:" as they were circumcised, he was circumcised also; he was "made under the law[k]." And, indeed, it had profited us nothing that he was made of a woman, had he not likewise been "made "under the law; for then the law could never have apprehended him; the law, with its penalties, having no concern with a person who, like him, was not an offender against it. For "the law was not made "for the righteous, but for the lawless and disobedi-"ent[l]." We are the transgressors, the debtors, whose bond was forfeited, and "the hand-writing of con-"demnation" standing in full force against us. But Christ, by submitting to the act of circumcision, voluntarily put himself under the law, and took the whole burden of it, as he did the cross, upon his own shoulders: since it is an axiom in theology, that "if any man be circumcised, he is a debtor to "do the whole law[m]." Christ therefore, by being *circumcised*, became that *debtor*, and entered into

[k] Gal. iv. 4. [l] 1 Tim. i. 9. [m] Gal. v. 3.



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covenant anew, as man's surety, to pay the uttermost farthing. But the debt was not a pecuniary one. The law was capital, and death the penalty incurred by the breach of it. Life was the debt due from us, and paid by Christ to the justice of Heaven. And therefore, when he took upon himself the obligation of paying it, which was as at this time, the covenant was made in the body of his flesh, and signed with his precious blood; to show that in him, now "made sin for us," the body of sin was to be cut off and destroyed; that the curse of the law had seized on him as the malefactor (for such he vouchsafed to be accounted, and among such he did not disdain to be numbered), and that his disciples, who were really malefactors, might therefore "go their "way[n]" free; the blood now shed being an earnest, that in due time he would shed the whole, and make his human nature an offering for sin. This he did upon the cross, when he paid indeed the uttermost farthing that the law itself could demand, and so fulfilled all justice; thereby "cancelling the hand-writ-"ing of ordinances, taking it out of the way, and "nailing it to his cross[o]," never more to appear in judgement against us. And accordingly, to our great and endless comfort, it is declared from the apostolical chair, that "there is now no condemna-"tion to them that are in Christ Jesus[p]."

The way, therefore, is now open for us to proceed to a consideration of the imposition of the name Jesus, at the time of circumcision. For then it was,

[n] John, xviii. 8. [o] Col. ii. 14. [p] Rom. viii. 1.

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that Christ laid himself under the obligation to SAVE, and began to answer to that sacred and glorious name. From the very moment in which a sufficient surety appears, and becomes responsible for the debt, "Deliver the man," saith the creditor, "I have "found a ransom[q]." The greatness of the deliverance may be estimated by the value of the ransom; and reciprocally, the value of the ransom by the greatness of the deliverance. The ransom was the dear and only Son of God; the deliverance was a deliverance from all the terrors of angry and avenging Heaven. "The law worketh wrath[r];" because it condemneth the transgressors thereof, that is, without the intervention of the evangelical covenant of repentance, it condemneth every child of Adam; seeing that, according to the conclusion fairly deduced by the same apostle from undeniable premises, "all have sinned, and come short of the glory "of God[s]"

But who shall express, or conceive adequate ideas of, that condemnation from which Christ hath delivered us; of that wrath, which the law worketh against every man who shall have no surety to appear for him, in the day when God shall come to require an account? As far, indeed, as the elements of nature can display to human sense the terrible majesty of their great Creator; as far as his eternal power and Godhead can be manifested to the sons of earth by the things that are made; so far did it once please God to manifest and display them; and that,

[q] Job, xxxiii. 24. [r] Rom. iv. 15. [s] Rom. iii. 23.



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upon an occasion which evidently pointed out to us his intention in so doing. The occasion I mean, was the giving of the law, the circumstances of which are presumed to be the best and fullest comment upon the apostolical text before cited; "The law "worketh wrath."

Let imagination, therefore, place us for a few minutes at the foot of Sinai, where every man must place himself, who would form an estimate of the salvation wrought for him by Jesus Christ. We shall find the mountain carefully fenced about, and guarded by this awful prohibition: "Charge the "people, lest they break through unto the Lord to "gaze, and many of them perish.—For if so much "as a beast touch the mountain, he shall be stoned, "or struck through with a dart. Take heed to your-"selves therefore: stand at the nether part of the "mount[t]." There, then, let us take our station, and behold a thick cloud, blackness of darkness, settling upon the mountain, and diffusing itself around: in the midst of this most horrible night, the flame of devouring fire rolling forth in dreadful waves, and burning to the midst of heaven: lightnings every moment issuing from it, and breaking through the surrounding gloom; the air incessantly thundering from every quarter; and, above all, the voice of a trumpet piercing the heavens, sounding long, and waxing louder and louder; the mountain smoking like a furnace, and quaking greatly from its foundations; all the people in the camp trembling and dying for fear: nay, "so terrible was the sight, that even

[t] Exod. xix. 12, 17, 21.

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"Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake[u]." And if Moses, who, as the figure of him that should come, had the honour to be a mediator between an offended God and his offending people—if he exceedingly feared and quaked at this terrible sight, what must be the state of the careless sinner, who having incurred all this heavy displeasure, nor ever employed an hour in meditating his escape, shall be suddenly called upon by death to meet it all, unprepared? And who is there among us, that thinks himself prepared to meet his God, as he appeared upon mount Sinai? Let the experiment be made only in an ordinary tempest of thunder and lightning. No sooner is that glorious voice of Jehovah heard in the heavens, but the earth trembles and is still. "Hear attentively," said Elihu in Job, "the noise of his voice, "and the sound that goeth out of his mouth. He "directeth it under the whole heaven, and his lightning to the ends of the earth. At this my heart "trembleth, and is moved out of his place[v]." What sensations then would be produced in the hearts even of the best of men by a manifestation like that at Sinai? And if the righteous scarcely sustain it, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

Nor let any man think himself unconcerned in that scene because it is past. The terrors of mount Sinai are still in force against every one who is not found in Christ Jesus; unless we suppose that the despisers of the Gospel will fare better than the contemners of the law, and not rather be thought worthy of much sorer punishment. The hour is coming, when our

[u] Heb. xii. 21. [v] Job, xxxvii. 1, 2, 3.

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eyes shall see more amazing sights, and our ears shall hear more terrifying sounds, than were seen and heard by the house of Israel in the wilderness. For yet a little while, and the same God who was revealed from heaven in flaming fire to give the law, shall again be revealed from heaven in flaming fire to inquire how it hath been observed, and to take vengeance on those who have not secured unto themselves a sponsor to stand in the gap for them. So that although the things seen and heard at mount Sinai did not affect us, yet the argument enlarged upon by the apostle, Heb. xii. undoubtedly doth; namely, that if the law was so terrible when enacted, how much more terrible must it be, when required at our hands by God, coming in glorious majesty to judge the world! Then shall there be blackness of darkness, not for a time, but for ever; then shall the lightnings of Sinai be extended over all the earth, and a fire be kindled which shall not be quenched; then shall the heavens pass away with the noise of a great and intolerable thunder; a far louder trumpet shall then not only pierce the ears of the living, but also sound an alarm through all the regions of the grave, and awaken those who shall have slept for ages in the dust; then he whose voice formerly shook the earth shall fulfil his promise, "Yet once more I "shake not the earth only, but also heaven[x];" both of which shall be removed, and their place no more be found; then shall all the tribes of the earth, as well as those of Israel, tremble, and mourn, and

[x] Heb. xii. 26.

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wail; and who, where is he, that thinketh he shall not then find cause to say with Moses, "So terrible "is the sight, that I exceedingly fear and quake!"

Such, therefore, is the wrath which the law worketh, and such is the condemnation of that "hand-writing "against us," from which our dear Master and Redeemer, as at this time, the time of his circumcision, engaged to rescue all who should believe in him. Then it was, that he took upon himself the law, and the penalty annexed to the breach of it, "being" as an apostle has expressed it, "made a curse for us, "to redeem us from the curse of the law[7]:" that is, to deliver us from the black darkness of sin and death; from the thunders and lightnings of the Father's vengeance; from the dread of the trumpet of eternal judgement; the dissolution and destruction of the world; the words of condemnation, and the unextinguishable flame; and having delivered us from all these terrors, to introduce us to a far different scene of things; to the light of righteousness and immortality; to the peace and love of God; to the still small voice of evangelical grace; to the harps of angels, and the music of hallelujahs; to the final sentence of absolution, "Come, ye blessed;" to a kingdom that cannot be moved; to the joys of heaven, and the glories of eternity. "For we are not come "unto the mount that might be touched (the palpa-"ble, material mount), that burned with fire, nor "unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and "the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words;

[7] Gal. iii. 13.

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"which voice they that heard, entreated that the "word should not be spoken to them any more: (for "they could not endure that which was commanded; "and if so much as a beast touch the mountain "it shall be stoned or thrust through with a dart: "and so terrible was the sight, that even Moses "said, I exceedingly fear and quake:) but we are "come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the "living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an in-"numerable company of angels, to the general "assembly and church of the first-born, which are "written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and "to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus "the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood "of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than "that of Abel[z];" the one crying as loud for mercy, as the other did for vengeance. And therefore, when this blood of sprinkling was first shed, "when eight "days were accomplished for the circumcising the "child, his name was called Jesus, which was so "named of the angel before he was conceived in "the womb," saying, "Thou shalt call his name "Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins[a]."

The doctrine of the day being thus stated and explicated, nothing remains, but that we reduce it to practice. Something Christ hath left us, in every mystery, to believe and to admire; something also to love and to imitate. The legal ceremony of circumcision, having received its accomplishment in Jesus, became of course null and void; insomuch that the per-

[z] Heb. xii. 18, &c. [a] Matt. i. 21.

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formance of it afterwards was justly deemed a renunciation of Christ, a denial of his advent in the flesh; for so the apostle witnesseth; "Behold, I Paul say "unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall "profit you nothing[b]." This is the unhappy case of the Jews, to this day; who, having lost the evangelical faith of their fathers, still continue under the law, with all its judgements in force against them; and this must be their case, until their heart shall turn to the Lord their God, until they shall be led to acknowledge the holy Jesus, as the end of the law, and the Saviour of the world. In the mean time, by us who believe, the doctrine is to be transmitted from the head to the heart, there by the operation of the eternal Spirit to do away what St. James styleth "the "superfluity of maliciousness[c]," cleansing us from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, that we may perfect holiness in the fear of God. It is true, that sin was mystically cut off and destroyed in the body of Christ; but wherefore? that it might live and flourish in us? God forbid. Christ was made sin for us, not that we might continue in sin, but that we might become the righteousness of God in him. For if we be dead to sin in Christ our representative, how can we, consistently with our profession, live any longer therein? How can the circumcision of Christ profit any one, who celebrates the festival, as constantly as it returns, himself still continuing "un-"circumcised in heart and ears?" Or, in other words, how can his baptism save him, whose life is one per-

[b] Gal. v. 2. [c] Περισσειαν κακιας—Jam. i. 21.

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petual renunciation of it? for baptism, which succeeded in the place of circumcision, takes up the mystery where that left it. The one showeth sin cut off, in and with the body of Christ; the other representeth it as buried in his grave, and the new man, through the power of his resurrection, risen again without sin unto salvation. And one cannot but admire the manner in which St. Paul hath interwoven the spiritual application of these two sacraments of the old and new law. "Ye are complete," saith he to his Colossians, "in Christ, who is the "head of all principality and power. In whom also "ye are circumcised with the circumcision made "without hands, by the circumcision of Christ, "buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are "risen with him, through the faith of the operation "of God, who hath raised him from the dead: and "you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumci-"sion of your flesh, hath he quickened together with "him, having forgiven you all trespasses[d]." We are to labour, therefore, after the spirit and power of these two sacraments in our hearts, that they be manifested in our lives and conversations. Otherwise, the letter of them can only condemn us. For as he is not a Jew, so neither is he a Christian, who is one outwardly; but he is a true Jew, and he is a true Christian, who is so inwardly; from whose heart and members the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life are cut off; who is dead and buried to sin, and risen again to righteousness. This

[d] Col. ii. 10.

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blessed work, sacramentally shown forth and begun in baptism, is to be continued through life by the successive renovations of repentance, by daily accessions of knowledge, faith, and charity, producing and carrying on a gradual growth in grace, until it be perfected. And as the season annually returns when it pleaseth God to begin again his work, which men so often behold, of renewing the face of the earth, by commanding the sun to re-visit and cheer our world, where nature, during his absence, hath drooped and languished away, but is again to be raised from the death and deformity of winter, to the life and beauty of spring, until, by a silent progressive operation, the year be crowned with the loving kindness of the Lord; we are hereby directed to look up by faith to the great luminary of the intellectual world, who declareth from his glorious throne, "Behold I make "all things new[e];" beseeching him to rise upon us with healing in his wings; to visit us with the light of his countenance and the joy of his salvation, that so old things may pass away, and we may be renewed in the spirit of our minds; to disperse the clouds and darkness of ignorance; to lay the wintry storms and tempests of disordered passions, and introduce into our hearts the calm and gladsome spring of everlasting righteousness and peace; to pour upon the year all the blessings of that glorious festival with which it commenceth; and, in one word, by making it HOLY, to make it HAPPY.

[e] Rev. xxi. 5.

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# DISCOURSE XII.

## THE EPIPHANY.

MATTHEW, II. 1, 2.

*Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.*

IN this remarkable part of sacred story there are two particulars, on which, at the present season, we are called upon to employ our meditations. And as they will suggest ample matter for that purpose, I shall crave your leave to enter upon a discussion of them without any farther preface.

The particulars are these:

First, the *persons* here mentioned by St. Matthew.

Secondly, Their *journey*.

First, then, let us contemplate the *persons* here mentioned by St. Matthew, their *country* and *condition*.

With regard to their *country*, the text gives us no farther information, than that they came from *the*

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*east*. Of the ancient expositors, some mention Chaldea, others Persia; but others, among whom are Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Cyprian, and Epiphanius, with more probability, perhaps, assign Arabia Felix, a country less distant from Judea, and lying to the south-east of it; the same country pointed out by the Psalmist, when, predicting the accession of the Gentiles, he saith, "The kings of Sheba and "Seba shall offer gifts:" the country from whence, attended by a train of camels bearing spices, came the queen of Sheba to the court of the temporary and representative PRINCE OF PEACE; the country particularly specified in the 60th chapter of Isaiah; "All they from Sheba[a] shall come; they shall bring "gold and incense, and they shall show forth the "praises of the Lord:" a country remarkable, by the testimony of historians, for plenty of gold and of the most precious aromatics: a country, in the neighbourhood of which Balaam uttered and left behind him his famous prophecy, concerning the "Star "that should arise out of Jacob."

As to the *condition* of these eastern travellers, it is said by the evangelist, they were Μαγοι; a term then applied, among all the nations of the east, in its primary and good sense, to those who gave themselves up to the pursuit of wisdom and knowledge, by all the means in their power. They were the great mathematicians, philosophers, and divines of the ages in which they lived, and had no other know-

[a] Sabea—extrema Arabiæ Felicis regio, Persico sinui proxima. VITRINGA in loc.

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ledge but that which by their own study, and the instructions of the ancients of their sect, they had attained unto. But as their credit in the world, on these accounts, was so great, that a learned man and a Magian became equivalent terms, the vulgar, looking on their knowledge to be more than natural, entertained an opinion of them as if they had been actuated and inspired by supernatural powers, in the same manner as has too frequently happened at other times and in other places. In the number of these Magi, or learned men, of old, persons not only of noble but of royal extraction often thought proper to enlist themselves. Many, therefore, have imagined these Magi to have been such; and the supposition, all circumstances considered, is not improbable.

But the particular of which we are certain, in which we are chiefly interested, and which at this time claims our attention, is that they were *Gentiles*, aliens by nature, like ourselves, from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenant of promise.

In the family of Noah, the true religion was universal or catholic. It continued to be so till the days of Abraham, when the general apostasy of the nations to idolatry made it necessary that a family should be called forth, and separated from the pollution that was in the world, to be the happy instruments of preserving faith upon earth, "till the seed should "come to whom the promise was made." By this step in the divine dispensations, it was never intended to "put the candle under a bushel, but to place it

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"on a candlestick," and there to keep it burning, that it might give light to those that were in the house, and to those who should enter into it. Many, from time to time, did enter into it; and therefore many more might have entered in, had it so pleased them. The transactions of God with his chosen people were not carried on in a corner; and there was no period in which he left himself without witness among the nations round about them. Let us take a cursory view of the divine proceedings in this light only.

Of Abraham's call, the inhabitants of the country from which he was called, and, in consequence of that call, departed for ever, could not have been ignorant; and as many as were disposed to obey the admonition of Heaven, might, doubtless, have had permission to attend him.

The patriarchal families, in their sojournings, travelled through many of the countries inhabited in those early ages. By the governors of those countries we find them treated with reverence, and acknowledged to be prophets, nay, "mighty princes of "God." The story of their divine call and destination must have been the subject of conversation wherever they came; nor would they be backward to make it so. They would, of course, communicate to others what Heaven had communicated to them. They would exhort men, as they went, to save themselves from that untoward generation. That such conversations and such exhortations were not without fruit, we may conclude from the mention that is made of "the souls which they had gotten in Haran," or the persons they had converted, and adopted into

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the holy family. The behaviour of Abimelech and his subjects is very observable, and shows there was, even among *them*, a sense and fear of God, which, it is to be apprehended, we might now look for in vain in countries calling themselves *Christian*.

The deliverance of Abraham's brother Lot, and the unparalleled overthrow of the cities of the plain by fire from heaven, must have been a very awakening and affecting call to all within hearing.

In process of time, we find Egypt, then the most powerful and learned of nations, opening its hospitable arms to receive the family of Jacob, having owed its preservation, in the days of dearth, to one of that family, ordained, in a wonderful manner, to save much people alive. Here the church was settled, increased and flourished for more than three hundred years, bearing testimony to the true religion in the eye of the world.

Let any one consider with himself the astonishing series of miracles wrought by Moses on a stage so public as this—the passage through the Red Sea; the destruction of Pharaoh and his host; the march of the Israelitish army, with the divine Shechinah, or glory, in the midst of it; the awful and tremendous appearance on mount Sinai, at the promulgation of the law; their entrance into Canaan; the passage of Jordan; the fall of Jericho; the excision of the devoted nations—could all these things be done, and the rumour of them not be spread in those days among the nations, both those that were near and those that were afar off?

The fame of this distinguished and extraordinary

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people must have increased with their conquests, till universal peace was established in the days of Solomon. To his court the princes of the earth resorted; struck with his glory, charmed with his wisdom, and desirous of being instructed by him. Would you know the exalted sentiments entertained by them of him, and of the people over whom he presided? Listen to the queen of Sheba speaking for them all: "It was a true report that I heard, in mine own "land, of thine acts, and of thy wisdom. How-"beit, I believed not the words until I came, and "mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was "not told me; thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth "the fame which I heard. Happy are thy men, "happy are these thy servants, which stand conti-"nually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom. "Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in "thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel; because "the Lord loved Israel for ever, therefore made he "thee king, to do judgement and justice[b]."

The mission of the prophet Jonah to preach repentance to the inhabitants of the great city Nineveh,

"[b] In Solomon's time there were 153,600 proselytes in the land "of Israel." 2 Chron. ii. 18. See FLEURY'S *History of the Israelites*, Part II. chap. ix. p. 84. This little book contains a concise, pleasing, and just account of the *manners, customs, laws, polity,* and *religion* of the Israelites. It is an excellent introduction to the reading of the Old Testament, and should be put into the hands of every young person. An elegant English version of it, by Mr. FARNEWORTH, dedicated to the present Archbishop of CANTERBURY, was printed in 1756, for WHISTON, WHITE, and BALDWIN.



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the capital of the Assyrian empire, is an event which deserves a place in our considerations on the subject before us.

When the Babylonian power was at its height under Nebuchadnezzar, the people of God, for their transgressions, were carried into captivity by him. Reflect upon the very remarkable incidents to which that captivity gave birth; the interpretation of the monarch's dreams; the accomplishment of one of them, by his degradation and subsequent restoration; the preservation of the three children in the furnace, and of Daniel in the den of lions; with the decrees in favour of true religion, promulgated through the whole extent of that enormous empire, to which most of the kingdoms of the known world were at that time subject.

Upon the ruins of the Babylonian empire arose that of the Medes and Persians; the celebrated founder of which began his reign with the publication of a decree, for the return of God's chosen people to their own land, with leave to rebuild their city and temple.

The prosperity and felicity of Israel after their return from Babylon; the interview between the high priest and Alexander, when upon his march to the conquest of Persia, as it stands recorded by Josephus; the well known exploits of the Maccabees against Antiochus; the connexion formed, about that period, between the Jews and the Romans; the translation of the Scriptures into Greek, and the universal expectation produced thereby among the nations, of a ruler that should come out of Judea—

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all these considerations, though perhaps they are suffered, in the course of our reading, to glide by us unobserved, as they occur separately and unconnected with each other, yet when they are thrown together, and duly weighed, may serve greatly to assist us in forming our judgement concerning the state of the Gentiles, and the testimony from time to time borne to the true religion, by the then church of God, in the Heathen world[c]. Notwithstanding the light Heaven has been pleased to manifest, whether in former or in latter times, many, both individuals and nations, have still continued to sit in darkness and the shadow of death. The fate of such is not our business to determine. One thing we know, and more we cannot, more we need not know; that in the last great day, when that point and all others shall be finally settled, He is to settle them, who, before men and angels, "will be justi-"fied in his saying, and clear when he is judged." What mercy can do, mercy will do. All iniquity shall then stop her mouth, and no person that shall be condemned will have power or reason to complain. To the curiosity, which, negligent of its own interest in Christ, is ever anxiously inquiring into the future destination of those who never heard of him, the pro-

[c] The reader will find many curious and valuable observations upon this important and interesting subject, in the Bishop of Carlisle's *Theory of Religion*, Part II; as also, in a Dissertation of Dr. Waterland, subjoined to *Scripture Vindicated*. See also Leland's *Advantage and Necessity of the Christian Revelation*, Part I. ch. xxix.



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per answer, surely is—"What is that to thee? "Follow thou me."

That the Jew, with the Scriptures in his hands, should be blind to the counsels of God respecting the Gentiles and their return to the church, is indeed truly marvellous. It was foretold that the posterity of Japheth should one day "dwell in the tents of "Shem[d];" that in the promised seed of Abraham "all the nations of the earth shall be blessed[e];" that to Shiloh should "the gathering of the nations be[f]." Isaiah is very express, and saith, "There shall be a "root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of "the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest "shall be glorious[g]."—"It is a light thing that thou "shouldest be my servant, to raise up the tribes of "Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I "will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that "thou mayest be my salvation to the ends of the "earth[h]."—"Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and "the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For be-"hold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross "darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon "thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And "the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to "the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes "round about, and see; all they gather themselves "together, they come to thee; thy sons shall come "from afar, and thy daughters shall be nursed at "thy side. Then thou shalt see, and flow together,

[d] Gen. ix. 27. [e] Gen. xii. 3. [f] Gen. xlix. 10.
[g] Isa. xi. 10. [h] Isa. xlix. 6.

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"and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; be-
"cause the abundance of the sea shall be converted
"unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come
"unto thee[i]." No less clear are several passages in the Psalms, which never failed to make a part of the synagogue service. "All the ends of the world
"shall remember, and turn unto the Lord, and all
"the kindreds of the nations shall worship before
"him[k]."—"The princes of the nations shall be joined
"to the people of the God of Abraham[l]."—"Praise
"the Lord all ye Heathen, praise him all ye nations;
"for his merciful kindness is ever more and more
"towards us, and the truth of the Lord endureth
"for ever[m]."

The event which bore so capital a share in the gracious designs of the Almighty, which was thus predicted, and celebrated beforehand by patriarchs and prophets, began, as at this season, to take place, by the coming of the Eastern sages to Bethlehem, in the name of us all, as representatives of the Heathen world. They were the first-fruits of that glorious harvest, afterwards reaped and gathered by the apostles and their successors; they were the standard-bearers of that noble army which, from the four quarters of the globe, hath since marched into the church, through the gates mercifully thrown open to admit them. From the consideration of the *persons* mentioned in the text, we proceed, therefore to consider,

[i] Isa. lx. 1, &c.
[k] Psal. xxii. 27.
[l] Psal. xlvii. 9.
[m] Psal. cxvii.

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Secondly, their *journey*; the *occasion*, and the *end* of it: "They came to Jerusalem, saying, Where is "he that is born King of the Jews? For we have "seen his star in the east, and are come to worship "him."

The birth of Christ was first revealed to the shepherds, who were Jews. For that purpose the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and the *glory* of the Lord shone round about them; a proper intimation of *his* appearance, at the brightness of whose rising on the intellectual world, darkness was to vanish, and the shadows fly away. A sign of the same import was vouchsafed to the Gentiles, as their conductor to the new-born Redeemer of mankind. "A *star*, which they saw in the east, went before "them, till it came, and stood over where the young "child was."

I shall not take up your time in proposing conjectures on the nature and form of this star. It was undoubtedly such as might best answer the end in view; and probably far exceeded the other stars, to appearance, in magnitude and brightness; as it notified the birth of one, who was fairer than the children of men, on whom rested the spirit of grace and glory.

How just and how beautiful an emblem was such a star of the blessed Person to whom it pointed! Celestial in its original; framed of the purest materials; admitting no dross and baseness into its composition; without spot, or the shadow of a cloud; shedding a lustre incapable of being sullied by the objects on which it fell, and passing through all things unde-

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filed; moving above the world, though moving in it; placed in heaven, to give light upon the earth; rising in the east, but diffusing its glories to the west: the first-fruits of the day, the bright and the morning star, dispelling the shades, clearing the skies, eclipsing the other luminaries, reigning alone and unrivalled in the firmament; from thence, not more bright than beneficial, exerting an influence, powerful, though silent and secret; directing and attracting men to the salvation it portended[n]!

The Eastern Magi, as is evident from the text, understood, before they began their journey, that the star which they saw did by its appearance indicate the birth of the "King of the Jews," that is, of the person foretold and expected, under that character, among the people of God. They understood, that this person, though styled "King of the *Jews*," would accept the oblations of the *Gentiles*, and extend to them the blessings of his reign. They understood, as it should seem, that he was more than man; "We have seen *his* star in the east, and are "come to *worship* him." By what means is it likely they should have attained this knowledge?

It is certain, that at the period when these things happened, and for some time preceding it, a general expectation of a ruler to arise in Judea prevailed all over the world. Suetonius, not to mention other

[n] See these particulars beautifully expanded and enlarged upon, by the admirable Dr. SOUTH, in a discourse upon Rev. xxii. 16. "I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and "morning star." Vol. III. Sermon VII.

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historians, expressly tells us, that an ancient and uninterrupted opinion had prevailed *in all the East*, that at that time (namely, at the beginning of the last Jewish war) it was decreed by the fates, that some one coming out of Judea should obtain the sovereignty. And no wonder, as a learned writer well observes, that such an opinion should be propagated throughout the East, when we consider the vast number of Jews which were spread over all the Eastern countries. In the reign of Ahasuerus, or Artaxerxes Longimanus, the Jews were dispersed throughout all the provinces of the Persian monarchy, and that, in numbers sufficient to defend themselves against their enemies in those provinces; and many of the people of the land also, as we read in the book of Esther, became Jews. After the Babylonish captivity, the Jews increased so mightily, that we find them not only throughout Asia, but in Africa, and in many cities and islands of Europe, mentioned in the second chapter of the Acts. Wherever they dwelt, they made many proselytes to their religion; and, in their attempts to this purpose, they must very much spread the expectation of the Messiah's coming; an article so important in itself, and so flattering to their national vanity. These opportunities of being informed of the approaching advent of the great King, the Magians of the East enjoyed in common with many other people. To which it may be added, that Zoroaster, the famous reformer of the Magian sect, is generally said to have been by extraction a Jew, and to have lived as a servant with one of the prophets, probably Daniel: he was well acquainted

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with the writings of Moses, and has inserted in his book many particulars from them.

Now, if we suppose the minds of men, of learned men more especially, to have been in this manner prepared, and rendered attentive to what happened, the sudden appearance of a new star in the heavens, super-eminent in splendour, and pointing towards Judea, might, perhaps, even without any farther information, be construed by them a sign, that the long looked for Prince and Saviour was actually born.

If we farther suppose, that the famous prediction, delivered in the mountains of the East, by Balaam, a prophet of their own, who, having his eyes opened, saw and mentioned, so many ages before its appearance, "the STAR that should arise out of Jacob, "the sceptre that should come out of Israel[o]:" if we suppose, I say, that this famous prediction was carefully preserved, and handed down from one generation to another, as would most probably be the case, it doubtless might have lent its assistance at this time, and upon this occasion.

But after all, when we consider, that every circumstance relative to the birth of Christ was, and must needs be, extraordinary and supernatural, full of wonder, and full of mystery; when we reflect on the journey and oblations of these sages, thus representing, as it were, the whole Heathen world, now at length returning to the acknowledgement and adoration of its Redeemer, who should have been all

[o] Numbers, xxiv. 17.

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along an object of faith to the nations, as well as to the Jews; why should we not conclude, that as an angel accompanied the glory that shone round the Jewish shepherds, and proclaimed to them the nativity of Jesus, so some beneficent spirit was enjoined to communicate to these Gentile philosophers the same gracious and comfortable intelligence. This, however, we may most assuredly conclude, that he who hung out the star in the firmament, visible to their outward eyes, took care that it should not be hung out in vain; but that some attendant light should at the same time shine inward, and irradiate their minds with the knowledge of its signification and import.

The fact is clear. They saw, they understood, they set out. No distance, no difficulties, no dangers, were sufficient to deter them. They passed the rocks and sands of the deserts, "the tents of Kedar," and "the hills of the robbers." Children of the faith of Abraham, they left their own country, obeying the heavenly call. Led by the star, as the Israelites of old by the pillar of fire, they pursued their way through the wilderness to the land of promise, there to seek Him, "in whom all the promises of God," made to the Gentiles, as well as to the Jews, "were "yea and amen."

Arrived at Jerusalem, they imparted the glad tidings to those from whom they should have received them. Neither afraid of Herod, nor ashamed of Messiah, they professed openly the occasion of their journey. They believed, and therefore they spake: "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" To

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you, O ye rulers and teachers in Israel, we apply ourselves. You must know the birth-place of the Redeemer. Saw ye him whom we seek? Tell us where we may find and adore him.

Far other sentiments were excited by this question in the breast of Herod. Human policy would not suffer him to hear of a king, without thinking of a rival; and therefore he immediately projected a plan for the destruction of the new-born Prince.

For this end, he summoned a council of the chief priests and elders, and demanded of them, where Christ should be born? Their lips were intended to preserve knowledge; and they did so. They answered, "In Bethlehem of Judea;" and cited their authority from the prophet Micah. They gave true information, and directed others aright, though they went not themselves. Herod inquired concerning Christ, as many do concerning his religion, in order not to revere and obey, but to oppose and destroy.

The Magi, having now obtained the desired information, proceedeth to Bethlehem; and, lest their ardour should be damped by any doubt, lo, the star which they saw in the east, and which, therefore, had disappeared for a time, again "went before "them, till it came and stood over where the young "child was." The sight of their original and faithful monitor cheered their spirits, dispelling every anxious and uneasy thought. "When they saw the star, "they rejoiced with exceeding great joy."

When their guide had conducted them to their journey's end, we read not that they were at all offended, or disconcerted, at the humble and lowly

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state in which they found the heaven-proclaimed King. The queen of Sheba came from far to hear the wisdom, and see the glory, of Solomon. She accordingly heard his wisdom, and saw his glory: both beyond even her high-raised expectation. These men came from far to behold the King of the Jews. But in his appearance there was neither beauty, nor glory, that they should desire or admire him. They saw, they heard nothing, but signs of poverty and weakness. Great, surely, was their faith; and greater, one is tempted to think, must have been their knowledge of the divine dispensations, than we are aware of. Where the star rested, there was the person whom they had been directed to seek. They therefore entered, and adored; and the Gentiles acknowledged him, whom the Jews disowned and rejected. They offered to him the richest productions of the country from whence they came; such things as were most precious, and of highest use and signification in ornamenting and exalting the services of the temple and altar. "All they," says Isaiah, "from "Sheba shall come; they shall bring gold and in-"cense, and," by so doing, "they shall show forth "the praises of the Lord[p]," while they thus devote themselves and their substance to his service. And since the Eastern Magi, as hath been before observed, are upon this occasion to be considered by us as the delegates and deputies of the Heathen world, the history of their journey and their oblations speaks the same language with that employed by St. John

[p] Isa. lx. 6.

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in the Revelation, concerning the Christian church: "And the nations of them that are saved shall walk "in the light of it; and the gates of it shall not be "shut at all; and the kings of the earth do bring "their glory and honour into it[q]."

Some reflections on the subject naturally offer themselves, in the way of *application.*

And first, let us evermore, on this returning festival, give thanks unto our Lord God, for the revelation of that great mystery of mercy, the restoration of the Gentiles to the church, from which they had been, for so many ages, excluded; rather should we say, they had excluded themselves. The unhappy prodigal voluntarily left his father's house, the door of which was still open, whenever he should be disposed to return, and re-enter. But the time was long ere he came to himself, and thought of being again received into the family of the faithful. No sooner was that the case, than the father, as if he had all along been looking out, in hope and expectation of his child, saw him while he was yet a great way off, ran to meet him, embraced him with a parent's tenderness, brought him into his house, made a feast for him, and commanded that no voice should be heard but that of joy and gladness, because he that had been lost was now found, he that had been dead was alive again!—"O sing unto the Lord a "new song; sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Sing "unto the Lord, bless his name: show forth his sal-"vation from day to day. Declare his glory among

[q] Rev. xxi. 24.

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"the Heathen, his wonders among all people. For "the Lord is great, and greatly to be praised: he is "to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of "the nations are idols: but the Lord made the hea-"vens. Honour and majesty are before him: "strength and beauty are in his sanctuary[r]!"

Secondly, it may be remarked, that the persons who came at this time to Bethlehem, were the learned of their country, men particularly addicted to the sciences of philosophy and astronomy. They contemplated the heavens, and at length were favoured with the sight of a star, which led them to Him who made the heavens, and who was then descended from on high, to perform a work still more wonderful. Man was formed with an understanding, for the attainment of knowledge; and happy is he, who is employed in the pursuit of it. Ignorance is in its nature unprofitable; but every kind of knowledge may be turned to use. Diligence is generally rewarded with the discovery of that which it seeks after; sometimes, of that which is much more valuable. Human learning, with the blessing of God upon it, introduces us to divine wisdom; and while we study the works of nature, the God of nature will manifest himself to us; since, to a well tutored mind, "The "heavens," without a miracle, "declare his glory, "and the firmament showeth his handy work."

Thirdly, from the example of the Magi, let us learn to be very watchful and observant of those lights which at sundry times and in divers manners

[r] Psal. xcvi. 1, &c.

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are vouchsafed to us. At the last day, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, and the circumstances of our lives shall pass in review, it will then be seen, that God did not "leave himself without witness." It will appear that the sinner had many calls, both from within and from without, to which he might have hearkened; and to which if he had hearkened, they had been the means of correcting, instructing, and saving him. Above all things, how attentive should we be to the Scriptures, wherein are contained the words that must finally decide the fate of those who have them in their hands, and are capable of perusing them? In them shines, with pure and ever-increasing lustre, the sure word of prophecy, pointing always from the beginning to the Saviour of mankind, and at last marking out the very place of his birth; like the star in the east, moving onward in its sphere, "till it came and stood over "where the young child was." If we are not led by the one to seek after the Redeemer, surely they who set out for Judea, upon the evidence of the other, must rise up in the judgement against us, and condemn us.

Lastly, when we reflect upon the difficulties and dangers that lay in the way of these Eastern sages, and the unremitting perseverance which vanquished them all, we shall blush at the remembrance of those trifling obstructions in our Christian course, which we have so often been tempted to deem insuperable. Our faith, once fixed on the basis of its proper evidence, should never be shaken by the cavils of sceptical and licentious men. For when there is great

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strength of argument set before us, if we refuse to do what appears most fit to be done, till every little objection is removed that metaphysical refinement can invent, we shall never take one wise resolution as long as we live. Let faith, therefore have its perfect work; let it go on, conquering, and to conquer, till we have thereby completely overcome the world. Though Herod should be moved, and all Jerusalem with him, let us follow our heavenly conductor, and, rejoicing with exceeding great joy, proceed directly to Bethlehem. There, through meanness, poverty, and obscurity, let us discern the King of the Jews, give him the honour due unto his name, acknowledge and adore him as our Lord and our God. And since we are commanded not to appear before the Lord empty, let us bring presents when we come into his courts. Let us offer to him of our substance, and the first-fruits of our increase; let us offer to him of the true riches with which he has blessed us; faith, tried, precious, resplendent, as *gold;* devotion, ascending from fervent affections, like the smoke of *frankincense* from the holy altar; love, peace, joy, and the other graces of sanctification, fragrant, cheering, and diffusive, like "*myrrh* and aloes, with all "the chief spices and powders of the merchant." Let us offer to him our strength, our time, and our talents, our souls and bodies, all we have, and all we are, to worship and obey him this day, and every day which it shall please him to add to our lives. With these dispositions and resolutions if we now come to his light, and haste to the brightness of his rising, we shall hereafter behold him in his meridian

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exaltation, when heaven and earth shall be full of the majesty of his glory; when, the last enemy being destroyed, he shall appear, as the "Prince of Peace," in a city that hath foundations; when all kings shall fall down before him, all nations shall serve him; when he shall reign for ever and ever, King of kings and Lord of lords; when he shall receive as his just and rightful tribute (the only tribute which can then be paid) the praises of his redeemed subjects, and the everlasting hallelujahs of the celestial choir, ascribing, as we now do, to him, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, all blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, might, majesty, and dominion, for ever and ever. And let all the people say, AMEN.



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# DISCOURSE XIII.

## THE RIGHTEOUS DELIVERED.

GENESIS, XIX. 29.

*And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in which Lot dwelt.*

EXTRAORDINARY interpositions of Providence demand extraordinary attention. If God speaks, it is but reasonable that man should hear. And when he executeth the vengeance to which the text referreth, he certainly spake, in an audible voice, to the hopes and fears of all the dwellers upon earth. By the deliverance vouchsafed to his righteous servant, he encouraged the hopes of such as, like him, preserved their integrity in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation; while, by the unparalleled destruction of the cities of the plain, he alarmed the fears of those who resembled them in impiety and iniquity. And although so many hundred years have passed since that astonishing catastrophe took place, yet the history should answer the same purpose now, that the event itself was designed to do then. No

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time can destroy the efficacy of this salutary medicine for the disorders of the world. Virtue and vice are not changeable things; they continue still the same; and there is no alteration in the divine decrees concerning them. Sooner or later, in this life or the next, a deliverance similar to that of Lot will be granted to the righteous; a destruction correspondent to that of Sodom will be the portion of the wicked. For, as St. Peter argues on the subject, "If God, turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah "into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, "making them an example to those that after should "live ungodly; and delivered just Lot, vexed with "the filthy conversation of the wicked—the Lord "knoweth how to deliver the godly out of tempta-"tions, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of "judgement to be punished[a]."

It is with the utmost propriety, therefore, that the church, in the course of her *proper* lessons, openeth the present season of humiliation with a display of so awful and affecting a scene of mercy and judgement; that the sinner may know how terrible is the wrath of an incensed God, and the penitent be taught the way to escape it.

In conformity to so judicious an appointment, it is proposed, in the following discourse, to take a view of the whole narrative, illustrating the several parts of it with such observations and reflections, as, it may be presumed, the church intended we should make upon it, with an eye to the great doctrine of *repent-*

[a] 2 Pet. ii. 6.



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*ance*, at this time more especially to be recommended and inculcated.

In the preceding chapter, the eighteenth of Genesis, we find the holy patriarch Abraham interceding with Jehovah for sinful Sodom. And we find (such is the amazing extent of divine mercy) that had there been only TEN righteous persons in the city, the rest would have been spared for their sakes. But universal corruption prevailed; and Abraham himself can intercede no longer. "The Lord left communing with "Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place."

Our blessed Lord, in whose name Abraham, as a prophet, and as the father of the faithful, interceded for Sodom, intercedes, in like manner, for the world, which, notwithstanding the wickedness of its inhabitants in general, is continued in being, on account of the righteous it contains, and the execution of God's counsels concerning his church. When the faithful shall be "minished from among the children "of men," when unbelief and disobedience shall have overspread the earth, the intercession of Christ will also be at an end, and vengeance will be poured out on the world of the ungodly. Then he, who now "maketh intercession for sinners," will no more "offer their offerings, or take up their names into "his lips." Then, that which alone hath so long stood between an angry God and a guilty world, shall cease to do so, and a deluge of fiery indignation will issue from the presence of the Lord, to devour the whole earth; even as the waters of the sea once brake forth, and destroyed all flesh, upon the removal of those bars and doors appointed by the

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Almighty to confine them within their channel. Let every man, therefore, be diligent to secure a part in the benefits of that gracious intercession, which is one day to have an end. Behold "the great High "Priest of our profession," standing before the altar in heaven, with his golden censer in his hand, ready to offer up the prayers of his servants, with the sweet incense of his own merits, to make them accepted with the Father. Now, then, let prayer ascend from earth to heaven, to glorify God, and pardon will descend from heaven to earth, to bless mankind, as we read in the epistle for the day—"Now is the ac-"cepted time, now is the day of salvation."

The destruction of Sodom being thus determined, Lot was to be first called out of it. Accordingly, "There came two angels to Sodom," on the evening before the dreadful sentence was put in execution; "and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom."

Happy were the days, when celestial visitants thus deigned to descend, and converse with men, "as a "man converseth with his friend." But surely, we have no reason to complain of any partiality shown, in this respect, to our fathers; we, to whom God hath been manifested, not under a similitude, or temporary appearance, but verily and indeed, in a body of our flesh, no more to be deposited, or laid aside, but actually taken up into heaven with him; we, to whom the word of life hath been sent by the hand of such a messenger, the "*angel* of the covenant[b];" we, to whom this comfortable promise hath been made

[b] Mal. iii. 1.

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by the mouth of TRUTH itself; "If a man love me, "my Father will love him, and WE will come, and "make our abode with him[c]." By his word, and by his Spirit, Christ continually visiteth his people, and dwelleth in the hearts of the faithful. Blessed is the man, who "sitteth at the gate of Sodom," ready to arise and depart out of a wicked world, at the moment when his Lord shall call him hence. He shall be visited with the visitation of the Almighty, instructed in the counsels of heaven, and delivered in the day of vengeance.

Upon the sight of his divine guests, "Lot rose up "to meet them, and he bowed himself with his face "toward the ground; and he said, Behold now, my "lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's "house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, "and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. "And they said, Nay, but we will abide in the street "all night. And he pressed upon them greatly, and "they turned in unto him, and entered into his house: "and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened "bread, and they did eat."

The admonition of the apostle, grounded upon this occurrence, naturally offers itself; "Be not for-"getful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have "entertained angels unawares[d]." It may be added, thereby Christians entertain their Redeemer, who for their sakes was once a *stranger* upon the earth, and who therefore regards hospitality shown to strangers on his account, as shown to himself. "I was a

[c] John, xiv. 23. [d] Heb. xiii. 2.

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"stranger, and ye took me in; for inasmuch as ye "did it to the least of these my brethren, ye did it "unto me[e]."

Instructed, moreover, by this example of Lot, when we have the honour, like him, to entertain heavenly guests, who present themselves to us by means of the word and sacraments in the church, let us instantly "arise," in heart and mind, "to meet them," laying aside, for a time, all worldly business, and forgetting those things that are behind. Let us "bow "ourselves with our faces toward the ground," in humble and fervent prayer, saying, in the words of holy David, "Remember us, O Lord, with the fa-"vour that thou bearest unto thy people, O visit us "with thy salvation[f]." "Turn into the house of "thy servants, and tarry with us." At first, perhaps, our prayers may seem not to be heard, as the angels said, they would "abide in the street all "night," and as Christ, when invited by the two disciples at Emmaus, "made as though he would have "gone farther[g]." But all this is done with the same intent that our Lord spake the parable of the poor widow and the unjust judge, to teach us, that "men "ought always to pray, and not to faint[h]." By delaying the return of our prayers, God designs to try our love, and train us to perseverance; not to reject our petitions, and to hide his face from us for ever. When Lot earnestly *pressed* the angels, they went in and tarried with him; and the two disciples *con-*

[e] Matth. xxv. 35, 40.
[f] Psal. cvi. 4.
[g] Luke, xxiv. 28.
[h] Luke, xviii. 1.

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*strained* Jesus to go in and sup with them. Faint hearts and feeble hands obtained not the kingdom of heaven, which "suffereth violence," and must be "taken by" an holy "force." "The unleavened bread "of sincerity and truth" is the feast which our Lord expecteth, when he is pleased to come and dwell in our hearts. "No leaven" of hypocrisy, deceit, and fraud, should then be found in our houses."

No sooner had Lot received and lodged his divine guests, than he suffered persecution on their account. And although he went out and spake with all the mildness imaginable to the wretches that "com-"passed the house about, old and young, from every "quarter—I pray you, brethren, do not so wick-"edly; to these men do nothing; for therefore came "they under the shadow of my roof;" what was the return made to this reasonable request, worded in the most humble and submissive terms?—"Stand "back. This fellow came in to sojourn, and he will "needs be a judge. Now will we deal worse with "thee than with them. And they pressed sore upon "the man, even Lot, and came near to break the "door. But the men put forth their hand, and "pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut the "door. And they smote the men that were at the "door of the house with blindness, both small and "great; so that they wearied themselves to find the "door."

Truth and righteousness are guests that often bring those who entertain them into trouble; and our Lord himself tells us, that, in one sense, he came "not to "send peace on earth, but a sword." At his birth,

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"Herod was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him." Wherever the Gospel was preached, it produced a commotion among those who could not bear the lustre of its beams, and "hated the light, because their "deeds were evil." The world opposed its Redeemer, when he "testified concerning it, that its "deeds were evil." Lot had lived too long in Sodom, and knew too much of its inhabitants, to desire the office of a *judge* among them, or any farther connexion with them than was necessary. But his righteous example condemned their wickedness; and that circumstance provoked them more than if he had really usurped the government. It was charged, likewise, upon our Saviour, though the meekest and lowliest of characters, that he "made himself a king," and endeavoured to supplant the authority of Cæsar. And for that crime, if we believe the superscription on the cross, he was executed. But the true cause both of the accusation and execution was no other than this, that, by doctrine and example, he detected and exposed a set of the vilest hypocrites the earth ever bore. Nor let the disciple of Christ vainly imagine, that the most inoffensive carriage, framed by the rules of Christian prudence, and actuated in all points by the spirit of meekness and charity, will prevent him from being sometimes accused of designs to which his soul is an utter stranger. Would he escape the censure of the world? He must cease to convict it of sin and error; he must conform to all its ways, and pace quietly in its trammels; a conduct, which, as they well know who tempt him to adopt it, will soon deprive him of all authority and

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ability to do his heavenly Master service, and promote his religion among men. So far, therefore, let him imitate the example of Lot, as to part with any thing rather than suffer violence to be done to his divine guests. Let him guard his faith and his conscience, and trust God for every thing else. He who preserved Lot, and smote his adversaries with blindness, can save them that love him in every age, and secure them under the wings of his providence, until the tyranny of the wicked be overpast, while the ungodly that trouble them, blind to their eternal interest, find not the gate of heaven, and come not into the dwellings of the righteous; but falling from one wickedness to another, and filling up the measure of their enormities, perish, at the last, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when "he cometh to judge the world in "righteousness."

Lot, being thus preserved from the malice of his enemies, is now informed concerning the decrees of Heaven. "The men said unto Lot, Hast thou here "any besides? Son-in-law, and thy sons, and thy "daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, "bring them out of this place. For we will de-"stroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen "great before the face of the Lord, and the Lord "hath sent us to destroy it." How alarming this intelligence! No farther respite allowed; instant destruction determined; the day of grace expiring, and a stormy night about to succeed it! He who would not perish, must leave all, and escape for his life!

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But are "the cities of the plain" only concerned here? or is not this written for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, it is written; since the Scriptures of truth, and, from them, the ministers and messengers of God, give us the same information relative to the world in which we dwell, namely, that "the "Lord will destroy this place," and will "purge "away the iniquity thereof with the spirit of judge-"ment, and with the spirit of burning." For—"Behold the Lord cometh out of his place, to visit "the wickedness of such as dwell upon the earth. "But who may abide the day of his coming? Who "shall be able to stand, when he appeareth? His "fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his "floor, and gather his wheat into the barn, but he "will burn the chaff with unquenchable fire. The "day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night; and "when men shall say, Peace, and all things are safe, "then shall sudden destruction come upon them, as "sorrow cometh upon a woman travailing with child, "and they shall not escape. Then shall appear the "wrath of God in the day of vengeance, which ob-"stinate sinners, through the stubbornness of their "hearts, have heaped unto themselves, who despised "goodness, patience, and long sufferance of God, "when he called them continually to repentance. "Then shall it be too late to knock, when the door "shall be shut; and too late to cry for mercy, when "it is the time of justice. O terrible voice of most "just judgement, which shall be pronounced upon "them, when it shall be said unto them, Go, ye

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"cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil "and his angels[1]." Such, therefore, being the message delivered to mankind, may it not be said to every one of them—"Hast thou here any besides? "Son-in-law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and "whatsoever thou hast, bring them out of this "place;" endeavour to withdraw their affections from a world doomed to ruin, and take them to heaven with thee. In a word, give all thy relations, thy friends, and thine acquaintance, the warning which is given thee.

The injunction received by Lot from the divine persons was immediately obeyed. "He went out "unto his sons-in-law, saying, Up, get ye out of "this place, for the Lord will destroy this city. But "he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-"law." A denunciation of approaching destruction, in the midst of peace and security, appeared so very extraordinary to them, that they could not bring themselves to believe it possible their father-in-law should be in earnest. They looked around them, and saw no symptoms of impending ruin. The city wore its accustomed face of gaiety and pleasure. No alteration was to be observed in the heavens above, or in the earth beneath. And that the knowledge of an event so important should be hidden from the rich and the great, the wise and prudent, and revealed only to one person, a sojourner amongst them—how could these things be?

They who have gazed on earthly glories, till they

[1] Exhortation in the *Commination Office.*

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are grown giddy; to whom want and misery are known only by their names; who make every day a day of fulness and indulgence, sitting down to eat, and to drink, and rising up to play; such find no small difficulty in believing, that a world, so delightful as they think this to be, shall shortly be burnt up, and all its beauties wither in a moment. They see that "all things continue as they were from the be-"ginning;" and are therefore ready to say, "Where "is the promise of his coming[k]?" In the polite circle of their acquaintance they hear nothing of this kind mentioned; it is foretold only by a few despised priests; and as to what these say concerning the wickedness of men, and the judgements of God, philosophers place it to the account of *superstition*, if they are Papists; *enthusiasm*, if they are Protestants. Thus it is that sinners deceive, or suffer themselves to be deceived, till the destruction predicted, falling upon them, demonstrates, when, alas! it is too late for them to profit by the demonstration, the fallacy of their reasonings, or rather, the vanity of their imaginations. For, surely, did not these priests "seem "as they who mock," when they declare what the sacred writings authorize them to declare upon the subject, it could not be, but their words must have more effect upon the minds and manners of men, than they are generally found to have. The intemperate person who heard them, would become temperate; the impure, pure; the avaricious, liberal; the turbulent, peaceable; the calumniator, charita-

[k] 2 Pet. iii. 4.

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ble; the proud, humble; the envious, loving; the liar, a speaker of truth. Should the Judge of the world appear in the clouds, this would be the case. And as faith is "the evidence of things not seen," rendering them present, and setting them before us, a right belief in that article of the creed which relates to the appearance of our Judge, would operate like his actual presence. "All men have not faith," and therefore all men do not "work righteousness." But "whether they hear or whether they forbear," Lot is to deliver the divine message to his sons-in-law; the watchman is to blow the trumpet in Sion; and every Christian is to exhort his brother; after which, the matter must be committed to other hands.

The day now dawned, which was the last the men of Sodom were ever to behold. "When the morning "arose, the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, "take thy wife, and thy two daughters which are "here, lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the "city."

Let us paraphrase this admonition of the angels, and suppose it addressed by the ministers of God to the sinner, at this penitential season—Arise, O man, repent, and be converted; break off thy sins, and escape from the pollutions of the world, while thy God calls thee, and allows thee time so to do. Perhaps the day hath dawned, which is to be thy last, and the destroying angel is even now come forth, with his sword drawn, to cut thee off from the land of the living, and consign thee to thy portion in the unknown region of separate spirits, waiting, either

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with joyful hope, or insupportable amazement, for the revelation of the day of God. Arise, therefore, and come away.

It is observable, that Lot himself, though he fully believed there should be a performance of those things that were told him, yet made not that haste to get out of Sodom, which the case required. For "while "he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and "upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his "two daughters, the Lord being merciful unto him: "and they brought him forth, and set him without "the city."

How apt is the sinner to linger, and to defer his repentance! How often is God forced, as it were, to arrest him by sickness, or some grievous calamity, and so to drag him from perdition! And, O how merciful is the Lord to that man whom, by any means, however painful and afflicting, he bringeth forth into safety, "and setteth him without the city!" Let such an one hear the voice of his gracious Deliverer saying to *him* in the person of Lot, "Escape for thy "life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all "the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be "consumed"—Escape, O sinner, for thine eternal life; look not behind thee on the pleasures thou hast left, neither let thine affections stay upon the earth; escape to the holy mountain, lest thou be consumed with the world.

Lot, despairing of being able to escape to the mountain, intercedes for the preservation of a little city in the neighbourhood of Sodom, and is accepted concerning it, God being graciously pleased to say,

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"Haste thee, escape thither, for I cannot do any "thing till thou be come thither. Therefore the "name of the city was called *Zoar*," that is, the *little* city.

Thus, in times of public calamity, there is often some little Zoar provided for them that love God, where they are wonderfully preserved from the judgements that fall on their country and their kindred. The Roman armies, which surrounded Jerusalem to execute on it the vengeance predicted, drew off, in an unaccountable manner, as if their design had been to give the Christians, contained within its walls, an opportunity of withdrawing to a little adjoining city, called Pella, which proved a Zoar to them, from whence they beheld the Roman eagles fly again to the destined prey, to be left no more till they had devoured it. And what is the church upon earth, but a Zoar, a little city (is it not a little one?) spared at the intercession of its Lord? Here the penitent, not yet strong enough to escape to the heavenly mountain, findeth rest and refreshment, and is invigorated to pursue his journey. Hither let him escape, and his soul shall live.

But let him bear in mind, that in making his escape, perseverance alone can secure him. "He "that endureth to the end," and he only, "shall be "saved." Of the four who left Sodom, one perished by the way, in heart and affection turning back to the forsaken city. Within sight of Zoar stands a pillar of salt, "the monument," saith the author of the book of Wisdom, "of an unbelieving soul[1]." No

[1] Chap. x. 7.

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"man having put his hand to the plough, and look-
"ing back, is fit for the kingdom of God[m]." "Re-
"member Lot's wife[n]."

The hour was now come, when Sodom, the gay, the haughty Sodom, should be no more. "The sun "was risen upon the earth, when Lot entered into "Zoar. Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and "upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord "out of heaven. And he overthrew those cities, "and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the "cities, and that which grew upon the ground." In this manner, to use the words of the above-cited author, "When the ungodly perished, WISDOM deli-"vered the righteous man, who fled from the fire "which fell upon the cities, of whose wickedness, "even to this day, the waste land that smoketh is a "testimony, and plants bearing fruit that never come "to ripeness[o]."

"As it was in the days of Lot, so shall it be also "in the days of the Son of man[p];" when that last morning shall dawn, and the Sun of Righteousness shall arise in glorious majesty upon the earth. No sooner shall he make his appearance, than the heavens, being on fire at his presence, shall be dissolved, and pass away with a great noise; the earth also, with the works that are therein, shall be burnt up. Then shall be fulfilled that which was spoken by the Psalmist, in terms evidently borrowed from the history before us: "Upon the ungodly he shall rain fire and

[m] Luke, ix. 62.
[n] Luke, xvii. 32.
[o] Wisdom, x. 6.
[p] Luke, xvii. 28.



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"brimstone, storm and tempest; this shall be their "portion[q]." And it may be observed that St. John, at the conclusion of his prophecy, describing the destruction of the ungodly, referreth likewise to the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, which, as St. Jude informeth us, "are set forth for an exam-"ple," or figure, "suffering the vengeance of eter-"nal fire[r]." In the xxth chapter of the Revelation, we view the Antichristian powers making war against the church, "encompassing the camp of the saints, "and the beloved city," the habitation of the great King, as the men of Sodom surrounded the house where the sacred guests were lodged. After which it is said—"And fire came down from God out of "heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that "deceived them, was cast into the LAKE OF FIRE "AND BRIMSTONE," an expression plainly alluding to the LAKE Asphaltites, or the Dead Sea, "where "the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be "tormented day and night for ever and ever." What Sodom is, the world shall be: and the last day when we shall arise, and look towards the place where its enchanting pleasures and delights, its dazzling beauties and glories, once existed, as "Abraham arose in "the morning, and looked toward Sodom and Go-"morrah, and toward all the cities of the plain," we shall behold a sight like that which presented itself to the patriarch, "the smoke of the country "going up as the smoke of a furnace!"

But the same all-gracious and merciful God, who,

[q] Psal. xi. 6. [r] Jude, ver. 7.

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"when he destroyed the cities of the plain, remem-
"bered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of
"the overthrow," when he shall destroy this place wherein we dwell, will remember the true Abraham, "the Father of us all," our dear Redeemer and Intercessor; and, for his sake, if we now repent and believe in him, will save us, in that day, from the ruins of a burning world, and from those fires which are never to be extinguished; that so, being delivered from the wrath to come, and admitted to a participation of the felicities of his kingdom, we may there, with angels and archangels, and the whole company of the redeemed, glorify him for his mercy, through the endless ages of a blessed eternity; ascribing, as is due, to the most holy and adorable Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three persons co-equal and co-eternal, all honour and power, might, majesty, and dominion, for ever and ever.



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# DISCOURSE XIV.

## THE SINNER CALLED.

EPHESIANS, v. 14.

*Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead; and Christ shall give thee light.*

WE are now in the midst of that hallowed season, when the church, by the voice of all her holy services, calleth the world to repentance, from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof. And if ever there was an institution calculated to promote the glory of God by forwarding the salvation of man, it is this appointment of a certain set time for all persons to consider their ways, to break off their sins, and to return from whence they have fallen through the infirmities of the flesh and the prevalence of temptation. For though most certain it is, that sorrow should be the constant attendant upon sin, and daily transgressions call for daily penitence, yet fatal experience convinces us of another truth no less certain, that in a body so frail, and a world so corrupt, cares and pleasures soon oppress the heart, and insensibly bring on the slumbers of listlessness and negligence as to its spiritual concerns, which,

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unless dissipated and dispersed by frequently repeated admonitions, will at length seal it up in the deep sleep of a final impenitence. It was wisely foreseen, that should the sinner be permitted to reserve to himself the choice of a *convenient season* wherein to turn from sin to righteousness, that *convenient season* would never come; and that the specious plea of keeping every day holy alike would often be found to cover a design of keeping none holy at all. It seemed good, therefore, to the church to fix a stated time in which men might enter upon the great work of their repentance. And what time could have been selected with greater propriety than this *Lenten*, or *Spring* season, when universal nature, awaking from her wintry sleep, and coming out of a state of deformity, and a course of penance imposed for the transgression of man, her lord and master, is about to rise from the dead, and, putting on her garments of glory and beauty, to give us a kind of prelude to the renovation of all things? So that the whole creation most harmoniously accompanieth the voice of the church, as that sweetly accordeth to the call of the apostle, "Awake, "thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and "Christ shall give thee light."

These lively and animating words, the peculiar force and energy of which it would be an affront to every understanding and every heart to point out, like the sound of that wakeful herald of the morning, which once called Peter to repentance, and which, daily admonishing the world of the sun's approach, calls up the inhabitants thereof to behold the brightness of his rising and to walk in his light, address

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themselves to the sinner, as to one fast holden in the bands of sleep, exhorting him to awake and look up, because the night is far spent, the day is at hand; and seem to be an evangelical paraphrase of that passage in the prophet Isaiah, which is a spiritual application of the most beautiful and magnificent image in nature, the rising of the sun upon the earth, with its effects and consequences; "Arise, shine, "for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is "risen upon thee."

The text, then, upon examination, will be found to imply thus much, that the world, without repentance and faith in Christ, is in a state of *darkness*, *insensibility*, and *delusion*, for such is the state of them that *sleep*. We will take a view, therefore, of each of these particulars.

And, first, these words plainly suppose the person to whom they are addressed to be in a state of *darkness*. For "they who sleep," as the apostle elsewhere observeth, "sleep in the night," which is the time of darkness, and therefore the season for repose. When the shadows of the evening are stretched out, and the earth, turning away from the sun, sinketh into the shadow of death, and thereby loseth all its form and comeliness; when the veil, that is cast over the face of nature, obliterateth the variety of colours which owe their being to the light, and abolisheth all the distinction of objects thence arising, introducing a joyless and uncomfortable uniformity, and rendering it impossible for any to "go forth to their labour;" when "the night cometh, in which none can work;" then it is that deep sleep falleth upon man. Here,

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therefore, we have, according to the text, a representation of the state into which the soul is cast by sin, and in which it continueth, till recovered out of it by repentance and faith. "Darkness," as saith the prophet Isaiah, "covereth the earth, and gross "darkness the people." Midnight overwhelmeth not the earth with a grosser darkness, than that which is superinduced upon the heart of man, when it departeth from God, and is turned away from its Maker, "He that followeth not Christ walketh in "darkness," because the light of life shineth no longer upon his tabernacle. When he has lost sight of the Sun of Righteousness, wisdom soon fadeth away, and understanding perisheth, and counsel is brought to naught, and the distinctions of good and evil are confounded. And now the man, walking in darkness, and not knowing whither he goeth, presently groweth weary and faint in his mind; whence, as natural darkness bringeth on sleep, ignorance, which is the darkness of the understanding, becometh the parent of indolence and inactivity, and casteth men by degrees into that deep sleep which is a suspension of the powers and faculties of the soul from the works of the spiritual life, as natural rest is a suspension of the members of the body from the labours of the animal life. This is the night when no man can work out his salvation for lack of knowledge; and the world, in this state, may not unfitly be resembled to the kingdom of Egypt, during the three days of thick darkness, when it is observed, that "no one stir-"red from his place." Such is the condition of those, who, in the proper and exact language of holy writ,

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are said to "SIT in darkness, and in the shadow of "death," no one moving from his place to go forth to his work, or to walk in the way that leadeth unto life. In this comfortless situation was the whole world at the coming of Christ; and every man, whom the concerns or the pleasures of this life keep from the knowledge of the Scriptures and the wisdom therein contained, and so render negligent in the business of working out his own salvation, and contributing his utmost towards forwarding that of others, every such man is so far relapsed into the same situation, and standeth in need of the apostolical call, "Awake, thou that sleepest."

But, secondly, the text plainly intimates to us, that the sinner, or man of the world, to whom it addresses itself as to one sleeping, is in a state of *insensibility*. For no sooner has sleep taken possession of any one, but forthwith all the senses are locked up, and he neither seeth, heareth, smelleth, tasteth, nor feeleth any thing. Incapable of being affected with what passes in the world, regardless of every thing that relates to his real interest in life, and no longer susceptible of pleasure or pain, joy or grief, from the objects which produce those sensations in others who are awake, he becometh like unto them that are gone down to the chambers of the grave, and sleep in the dust of the earth. Wherefore the apostle saith, using sleep and death as synonymous terms, "Awake, thou that SLEEPEST, and arise "from the DEAD." This address therefore to the sinner, or man of the world, is founded upon a supposition that the soul, by sin and the love of the

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world, is cast into the same state of insensibility with regard to things heavenly, that the body is in, while sleeping, with regard to things earthly; a state in which its spiritual senses, those senses which the apostle tells us should be "exercised to discern "good and evil," are sealed up, and admit of no impression from their proper objects. And that this is in truth the case, a cursory view of the ideas transferred in Scripture from the bodily senses as rendered unfit for their respective uses by sleep, to the powers and operations of the mind as impeded by sin, will quickly convince us.

The prophet Isaiah, describing his wretched countrymen in their state of apostasy and obduracy of heart, says of them, "The Lord hath poured out "upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed "your eyes." Present the most finished and beautiful picture before the eyes of a person asleep; he sees no more of it than if it was not there. And how often are the pictures of our sin and deformity, and the righteousness and beauty of the Redeemer drawn by the pencil of the Spirit in the Scriptures of truth, how often are they offered to the understandings of men who yet see neither! And why? Because "a spirit of deep sleep," induced by their attachment to something in the world, that comes in competition with the doctrines or precepts of the Gospel, "is "fallen upon them," so that, "having eyes they see "not." Go into the chamber of him that sleepeth, and read to him a piece of the most interesting news, play him the sweetest notes on the finest instrument, or sound the loudest and shrillest trumpet; while he

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sleeps, he hears nothing. To as little purpose do the ministers of the Gospel preach to the obdurate worldling the "glad tidings of great joy, that unto us is "born a Saviour," or the awful tidings of as great terror, that "he cometh to execute judgement on all "that are ungodly." The heavenly strains of love and mercy sounded forth by the harp of David, when breathed on by the Spirit of the Holy One, or the piercing trumpet of eternal judgement, waxing louder and louder on the top of Sinai, are equally unheard by him. He sleeps on still, and takes his rest; and therefore, "having ears, he hears not." Offer to the nostrils of one who sleepeth the most fragrant flowers that grow, the rose and the lily in their highest perfection, or the richest spices produced in the warmest climes; the flowers have no fragrance, the spices no odours for him. And are there not, who take no delight in that blessed Person, from the comfort and refreshment he affordeth to the drooping soul, as well as from his matchless beauty and perfection, styled "the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys:" who can perceive no "sweet smelling savour of life "unto life," in that Gospel of peace, which is compared unto "myrrh, and frankincense, and all pow-"ders of the merchant?" Open the mouth of him that sleepeth, and fill it with the choicest honey; you have no thanks from him, for he tasteth it not. As little relish hath one in a state of sin and worldly-mindedness for those promises, which, when the penitent believer tasteth, he crieth out in transport, "O how sweet are thy words unto my mouth; yea, "sweeter than honey unto my throat!" Lastly, a

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person during the time of sleep feels no wounds or bruises, and passes imperceptibly into the regions of death. And this is the very apostolical description of hardened sinners, who have given themselves over to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness: they are said to be "past feeling, having "their conscience seared with a hot iron[a]." Awakened by the fires which burn for the impenitent, they feel at last the avenging hand of an angry God, and lift up their eyes in those torments, which will forbid the closing them any more for ever.

Thirdly, it appears from the text before us, that the world is in a state of *delusion;* for such is the state of them that sleep. To all things that really concern them they are insensible; but they are earnestly employed, meanwhile, in a shadowy fantastic scene of things, which has no existence but in their imaginations. And to what can the life of many a man be so fitly compared, as to a *dream?* What are the vain employments and amusements of multitudes, but "visions of the night?" And is not he who wasteth his time and breath in relating the history of them, "as a man telling a dream to his fellow?" Is a dream made up of illusive images, false objects and pursuits, false hopes and false fears? So is the life of a man of the world.

Now he exults in visionary bliss, now he is racked with disquietudes created by his own fancy. Ambition strains every nerve to climb to a height that is ideal, till, with all the eagerness of desire, grasping

[a] 1 Tim. iv. 2.

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at the summit, she seems to feel herself half dead by a fall that is as much so; since neither if a man be in power, he is really and in the sight of God the greater; nor if he be out of power, is he the less. Avarice flies with fear and trembling from a poverty of which there is no danger, and with infinite anxiety and solicitude heapeth up riches that have no use. And while pleasure is incessantly shifting her painted scenes before the fancies of the gay, infidelity oftentimes seduceth the imaginations of the serious and contemplative into the airy regions of abstraction, setting them to construct intellectual systems, without one just idea of the spiritual world, and to delineate schemes of religion, exclusive of the true God and his dispensations. Thus doth man walk in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain, like one endeavouring to win a race in his sleep, still striving after that which he cannot attain unto, so long as he expects to find a solid, substantial, and durable comfort in any thing but "the kingdom "of God, and his righteousness."

Again: Is a dream ever wandering from one thing to another that has no connexion with it, and patched up of a thousand inconsistencies, without beginning, middle, or end? Not more so than the life of him who, being devoted to the world, and at the mercy of his passions, is now in full chase after one shadow, now after another; so continually varying and changing, and yet withal so uniformly trifling and insignificant in all his sentiments and proceedings, that were the transactions of his days noted down in a book, it may be questioned, whe-

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ther a dream would not appear, upon the comparison, to be a sensible and regular composition.

Once more: Is a dream fleeting and transitory, insomuch that a whole night passeth away in it as one hour, nay as one minute, since, during sleep, we have no idea of the succession of time? And what is a life of fourscore years when looked back upon! "It is but as yesterday, seeing it is past as a "watch in the night." How beautifully is the fading nature of all those things on which worldly men place their affections, set forth to us in the holy Scriptures, under this most expressive image! "Knowest not thou this of old," says Zophar in Job, "since man was placed upon the earth, that "the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy "of the hypocrite but for a moment? Though his "excellency mount up to the heavens, and his head "reach unto the clouds, yet he shall perish for ever "like his own dung: they which have seen him shall "say, Where is he? He shall fly away as a dream, "and shall not be found; yea, he shall be chased "away as a vision of the night[b]." "I was envious," says the Psalmist, "at the foolish, when I saw the "prosperity of the wicked.—Their eyes stand out "with fatness: they have more than heart could wish "—Behold, these are the ungodly that prosper in the "world, they increase in riches[c]." The sight at first staggered his faith; and he was tempted almost to distrust the promises of God made to the right-

[b] Job, xx. 4. et seq. [c] Psal. lxxiii. 3, 7, 12.

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eous. "Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain, "and washed my hands in innocency." But when he "went into the sanctuary of God," and consulted the divine oracles, as we all should do, upon these matters, then he "saw the end of such men," and the transient nature of that wealth which had excited his envy: "How are they brought into desolation as in "a moment! they are utterly consumed with ter-"rors! As a dream when one awaketh, so, O Lord, "shalt thou make their image to vanish." And was the task enjoined us to describe that disappointment and wretched emptiness which the miserably deceived soul of him who lives and dies in carnality and worldly-mindedness will experience upon the moment of her separation from the body, what words could we find for the purpose, like these of the prophet Isaiah? "It shall be as when a hungry man "dreameth; and behold he eateth; but he awaketh, "and his soul is empty; or as when a thirsty man "dreameth, and behold he drinketh; but he awaketh, "and behold he is faint, and his soul hath appe-"tite[d]," remaining altogether unsatisfied with the pleasures which he seemed for a while to enjoy. Such a state of *delusion* is the state of the world; so vain, so incoherent, so transitory, are the schemes and designs of worldly men: and, however important they may appear to the projectors of them at the time, yet most certain it is, that what the Scripture saith of Pharaoh, may be said, with equal truth, at

[d] Isa. xxix. 8.

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the death of every man who has spent his days in things pertaining to this life only; "So he awoke, "and, behold, it was a dream!"

But it is high time to change this gloomy scene for one that is more agreeable. Permit me, therefore, to contrast the foregoing description of the state of man, a stranger to repentance and faith in Christ, with one of the opposite state, to which we are called in the text; "Awake, thou that sleepest, and "arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee "light."

And first, the sincere penitent, who really and truly turns from sin to righteousness, and from the world to Christ, passes from *darkness* to *light*. He undergoes a change, like that made in man and in universal nature by the dawning of the morning, when there is a resurrection of both. For then it is, that man awaketh out of sleep, and ariseth as it were from the dead, to behold the light looking forth from the windows of the east, and the day breaking upon the tops of the hills; at which time the shadows fly away, and the clouds parting asunder, open a passage for that life-giving luminary, whose appearance the expectation of the creature impatiently waiteth for. The sun, "that marvellous "instrument of the Most High, ariseth in glorious majesty, disclosing and adorning all things in heaven and earth. And now the darkness is past, and the light shineth, to the end that all who are risen may go forth to their work, and to their labour, until the evening. So is it likewise in the repentance of a sinner. At the powerful call of God, whether by his

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word read or preached, by the admonition of charitable friends, by some happy incident, or change of fortune, by the death of others, or the sickness of the party himself—for various are the methods made use of by the Divine Providence for this gracious purpose—at the powerful call of God he awaketh to righteousness, and findeth himself in a new world. He perceiveth that, through the tender mercy of God, the day-spring from on high hath visited him, to give unto him the knowledge of salvation for the remission of his sins, concerning which he was before in darkness and the shadow of death. But now all the shadows of his former ignorance fly away, all his earthly prejudices and passions are overcome, and dispersing like the cloud before the morning sun, the way is prepared for the Sun of Righteousness to arise upon him. By *his* glorious light, all the dispensations of God, in heaven and upon earth, are made manifest; and the man, being arisen to a life of grace, goeth forth to the work of his salvation, and to his labour of love, until the evening of his day.

Secondly, a sinner by repentance is brought out of a state of *insensibility* into one of *sensibility*. No sooner is a person awaked out of sleep, but he finds himself endued with the use of all his senses, powers, and faculties. He walketh abroad, and his eyes are blessed with a sight of the whole creation risen with him from the dead, and rejoicing in the glorious light shining upon it from above. He surveys that lovely variety which displays itself upon the face of the earth, and beholds the beauty and brightness of the firmament of heaven. But chiefly his attention

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is fixed on the great ruler of the day, who gives life and comeliness to all things. His ears are entertained with the music of the birds of the air, who fail not with their sprightliest notes to salute the rising sun; and his nostrils are refreshed with the grateful smell sent forth, in the hour of prime, from the ground and its productions. He is prepared to taste with delight the food afforded him by the bounty of God; and no part of his body is without the sensation proper and necessary for it. Similar to this is the alteration which takes place in the soul of the humble penitent, when at the call of God he awakes, and arises from the dead. If the light be sweet, and it be a pleasant thing to the eyes to behold the sun; sweet to the mind likewise is the light of life, and a pleasant thing it is to the eyes of the understanding to behold the Sun of Righteousness, who bestows by his word that divine knowledge, that heavenly wisdom, which is to *them* what the material light is to the bodily organs of vision. Hereby the penitent believer is enabled to behold the wonderful works of the Lord, the mighty things he hath done for his soul, having created all things anew in Christ Jesus, and brought the world out of darkness into his marvellous light. But above all the works he is led to contemplate and to adore the Author of them all; to look up steadfastly, with St. Stephen, into heaven, and see Jesus enthroned at the right hand of the Majesty on high, enlightening and enlivening all things with the glory of his grace. And this is what St. Paul so earnestly begs of God for his Ephesian converts, that being now awake from sin, they might



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behold the works and the glory of the Redeemer. "I cease not," says he, "to make mention of you in "my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus "Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you "the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the know-"ledge of him; the eyes of your understanding be-"ing enlightened; that ye may know what is the "hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory "of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the ex-"ceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who "believe, according to the working of his mighty "power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised "him from the dead, and set him at his own right "hand in the heavenly places, far above all princi-"pality, and power, and might, and dominion, and "every name that is named not only in this world, "but that which is to come: and hath put all things "under his feet, and given him to be the head over "all things to the church, which is his body, the ful-"ness of him who filleth all in all[e]." The hearing ear is another gift of God to the sincere penitent, who is now no longer deaf to the voice of his Redeemer, speaking to him by his holy word, which entereth through his ears into his heart: he heareth and delighteth in the melody of praise and thanksgiving, that music of the church, that voice of joy and health in the dwellings of the righteous; nay, faith carries him to the door of heaven, where listening, he heareth that new song, and those everlasting hallelujahs, in which he one day hopeth to bear his

[e] Ephes. i. 16, et seq.

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part. And now he walketh forth in the garden of God, the holy Scripture, to enjoy that sweet-smelling savour of life unto life, which ariseth from the comfortable promises therein contained, grateful as the fragrance of the holy vestments in the nostrils of the patriarch, "as the smell of a field which the "Lord hath blessed." He "hungereth and thirst-"eth after righteousness," and hath a true taste and relish for the bread of life, insomuch that he inviteth all men to partake with him, in the words of the Psalmist; "O taste, and see that the Lord is gra-"cious!" And such is the sensibility of his soul, that as he feels an exquisite delight in the testimony of a good conscience, so is he pained at the recollection of the least sin; nor can he find any rest, till he has invoked the aid of the great Physician of souls by fervent and importunate prayer, opened his grief to him by a full and free confession of his guilt, and received a perfect cure from his hands, by a fresh application of his all-sufficient merits.

Thirdly, the penitent is translated from a state of *delusion* to a *sound judgement* and *right apprehension* of things, from shadows to realities; even as one awaketh from the romantic scenery of a dream, to behold all things as they really are, and to do his duty in that station in which God has placed him. No sooner is a man awaked to righteousness, and risen with Christ to work out his salvation, but all his former vain and unprofitable life seemeth as a night-vision. When the Lord turneth away the captivity of one whom Satan hath long bound with the chains and fetters of evil habits; when he delivereth him out



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of the hands of his enemies to serve God without fear; the time of his bondage, under the elements of the world, and the dominion of sin, appeareth as a dream, from which he now findeth himself most happily awaked; awaked to the prospect of a bliss that is not visionary, of a real and substantial good, that melteth not into air, as the shadowy enjoyments of this world do, but affordeth solid comfort to the person who is possessed of it; awaked to follow after that honour which cometh from God only, those riches which neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, those pleasures which are at God's right hand, and that wisdom which maketh wise unto salvation; awaked to a steady and uniform pursuit of these glorious objects, instead of that endless desire of novelty and variety which wearieth the men of the world, leaving them always disappointed of their hope; in a word, awaked to the knowledge and love of an inheritance in light, that fadeth not, but shall endure for ever in heaven, even when the world itself shall fly away as a dream, and the very remembrance of it vanish as a vision of the night.

If, therefore, these things be so—and surely the Scriptures say they are so; if the state of the sinner, or man of the world, be one of *darkness*, *insensibility*, and *delusion*; and if such a state be not judged preferable to one of *light*, and *sense*, and *substantial reality*; let no man be disobedient to the voice of the church, which, through the course of this penitential season, incessantly addresseth every one of her children; "Behold, now is the accepted time; "behold, now is the day of salvation." Awake,

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therefore, thou that sleepest: awake, and sing, ye that dwell in the dust, and mind earthly things: awake, O thou Christian soul, and utter a song in praise of him who hath redeemed thee: awake, awake, put on the Lord Jesus thy strength, put on righteousness and holiness thy beautiful garments; shake thyself from the dust, and set thy affections on things above: the night is far spent, the day is at hand; cast off therefore the works of darkness, and put on the whole armour of light: arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee: arise, and stand up from the dead, and Christ shall give thee the light of life.

Awakened by these repeated calls, be it our care to arise without delay to newness of life, not suffering ourselves, through sloth and indolence, to relapse into evil habits, like the sluggard upon his bed, who requireth always "a little more sleep, a little more "slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep." Let us arise at the first admonition, because, that being rejected, God may not vouchsafe us another; and there will be more difficulty in obeying it, if he should do so. Let us therefore dread a relapse, and guard against it.

For this purpose, let us be constantly *employed* in some good work, and much of the danger will be removed; since listlessness of the mind, like a lethargy in the body, is best cured by motion and exercise; and when temptations are creeping upon us, there is no better method of baffling and putting them to flight, than by forcing ourselves to read, or pray, or perform some other work of piety to God, or charity to our

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neighbour. Above all things, let us beware, that surfeiting and excess do not oppress and weigh down the heart, inducing sleep upon the soul, as well as the body. Let us be temperate, let us be sober, walking evermore as children of the light, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; for all these are the works of darkness; but that darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. Thus shall we be qualified to set and keep that constant watch, which is absolutely necessary to perceive and repel the enemy, at his first approach. "What I say unto "you," saith Christ to his disciples, "I say unto all— "WATCH." This if we do, we shall spend our time, as it ought to be spent, in working out our salvation, and not dream away, in vanity and folly, the precious and fleeting hours allowed us for that purpose. And happy, thrice happy, the man, who, in the evening of life, taking a survey of what is past, shall be able to say, with an humble confidence, to his blessed Master, as that Master, in the days of his flesh, said to the Father; "I have glorified thee on the earth, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to "do." His body shall lie down in the dust in perfect peace, and rest in hope, till the dawning of the great day; when that likewise shall receive its summons from heaven, by the voice of the archangel; "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the "dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

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# DISCOURSE XV.

## THE NOBLE CONVERT.

ACTS, VIII. 34, 35.

*And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him* JESUS.

WE are now drawing towards the close of that penitential season, set apart by the wisdom of the church for retirement and recollection, confession and humiliation, mortification and self-denial, meditation and devotion; to the end that, having discovered and cast out our sins, having subdued pride, and extinguished concupiscence, having brought the body into subjection, and rendered the spirit tender, and humble, and holy, we might be prepared to attend our blessed Redeemer at the celebration of his last passover; to accompany him from the garden to the high-priest's palace, from thence to the prætorium, and from thence to mount Calvary; there to take our station, with the Virgin Mother, and the beloved disciple, at the foot of the cross, and "look

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"on him whom we have pierced." The history therefore of the Ethiopian nobleman's conversion, effected by St. Philip's expounding to him the 53d chapter of Isaiah, seemeth no improper subject whereon to employ our thoughts, at a time when the church is enforcing on us the duties of repentance and faith, by the same argument which first produced them in the heart of that illustrious person; namely, the unexampled sorrows and sufferings of the Son of God for the sins of the world; to the contemplation of which is dedicated the great and holy week upon which we this day enter; a week, spent in such a manner by them of old time, as made it evident to every beholder, that these were "the days in "which the bridegroom was taken away." For now (as the ancient canons and constitutions inform us) men gave over all worldly employments, and, making the happy exchange of earth for heaven, betook themselves wholly to devotion, heightened and improved by those religious exercises, which the experience of pious men in all ages hath evinced to be conducive to that end. Dismissing therefore from our thoughts the cares and pleasures of a vain and transitory world, every thing that perplexeth, and every thing that defileth, let us take a view of the no less engaging than interesting circumstances of the history before us.

St. Philip, commonly styled the Evangelist, one of the seven deacons, and next in order to St. Stephen, being driven from Jerusalem by the persecution which arose at the time of the protomartyr's death, went down to the city of Samaria; and, ever mindful

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of the commission he had received, and the necessity of executing it, preached Christ to the people there. So that the storm raised by the adversary against the church turned out to the furtherance of the Gospel, being made a means of wafting the seeds of evangelical truth to distant lands, in order to a more plentiful and glorious harvest.

While he was employed in edifying his Samaritan converts, a fresh opportunity was offered him of advancing his Master's kingdom; as, indeed, opportunities of doing that blessed work are seldom wanting to him who has the piety and skill to seize and improve them aright. "The angel of the Lord spake "unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go towards the "south, unto the way that goeth down from Jeru-"salem to Gaza, which is desert." The most unpromising journey shall be a prosperous one, when undertaken in obedience to the divine designation, intimated by a lawful call. Nor let the minister of Christ despair, whose lot is cast in the midst of spiritual barrenness and desolation. He who sent Philip to a desert place, did not send him there for naught; since even in such a soil he raised a fair and fragrant flower, which having bloomed, for its appointed time, on earth, in the beauty of holiness, now displays its colours, and diffuses its odours, in the paradise of God; who, whenever he pleases to bless the labours of his servants, can cause "the wilderness and the "solitary place to be glad for them, and the desert "to rejoice, and blossom as the rose."

This Philip knew, and therefore made no objections, and asked no questions, but "arose and went."

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And he who shows the same unreserved obedience to the will of his Lord, shall reap the fruits of it in this world, and that which is to come.

For no sooner was Philip arrived at the place appointed, but (the wisdom of God so ordering) behold, arrived at the same time, "a man of Ethiopia, an "eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen "of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her "treasure." But what made this statesman great in the sight of God, was his extraordinary piety, which led him to the temple at Jerusalem. For the fame of this temple, diffused abroad among the nations round about, brought many continually to inquire "concerning the Name of the Lord," who resided in it, and to worship him in the court assigned them for that purpose, which was therefore styled the court of the *Gentiles*. Among others came this Lord Treasurer of Ethiopia, who, engaged, as he must of course be by his office, in a multiplicity of worldly business, and advanced to the height of worldly honour, could find time and inclination, it seems, to take a long journey on the account of religion; thinking himself never so well employed, as when attending the city and court of the great King; never so highly honoured, as when suffered to prostrate himself before Jehovah, the God of Israel: "He "had been to Jerusalem to worship, and was re-"turning."

But as the tide of secular affairs, if suffered to break in, will presently extinguish the spark of devotion, though kindled in the soul by a coal from the altar; in order to cherish the heavenly thoughts and

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affections produced in his mind by worshipping towards the holy temple of the Lord, as he returned home in his chariot "he read Esaias the prophet;" thereby teaching us where to look for Christ, and how to sanctify with pious reading all our leisure hours; out of the many thousands of which so carelessly and extravagantly squandered (though God knows we have need enough of them all), there is not one, but, if rightly used, might set us considerably forward in our way to glory. How will this illustrious personage arise up in the judgement against all those Christians, who in the hours of domestic ease and tranquillity never open a Bible, when he would not even travel without one in the chariot with him! "*Sitting in his* "*chariot* he read Esaias the prophet." A nobleman thus employed was an object that engaged the attention of Heaven, and an evangelist was sent to sow the seed of eternal life in a ground so well prepared. "Arise," says the ever-gracious Spirit of God to Philip, "and go toward the south, to the way that goeth "down from Jerusalem to Gaza, which is desert:" for there he might behold a minister of state, sitting in his chariot, and reading the Scriptures! So ready is God to teach, when man is ready to hear.

Such an opportunity of instructing the well-disposed was not to be neglected, for a single moment, by the faithful messenger of Christ. No sooner, therefore, did the spirit order Philip to "go near "and join himself to this chariot," but he "ran thi-"ther" instantly.

Being come to the side of the chariot, he "heard "him read Esaias the prophet;" and his introductory

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question to him was "Understandeth thou what thou "readest?" A question, which every reader of the sacred books must frequently put to himself, if he would not read in vain. And happy they, who like this nobleman are not offended when it is put to them, but show the meek and teachable disposition of their minds by returning his answer, "How can "I, except some man should guide me?" Such will have the wisdom and grace to desire the company of those (however lowly their appearance and condition in the world may be, compared with their own) who can tell them words, whereby they may be saved. "He desired Philip, that he would come up, and "sit with him."

The evangelist being seated in the chariot, they proceeded to consider the place of Scripture, to which the providence of God, predisposing those incidents commonly ascribed to chance, had directed the nobleman; which was the following passage in the 53d chapter of Isaiah; "He was led as a sheep "to the slaughter, and like a lamb dumb before his "shearers, so opened he not his mouth. In his hu-"miliation his judgement was taken away; and who "shall declare his generation? for his life is taken "from the earth."

It is obvious, at first sight, that the prophet is here drawing a picture of afflicted innocence. But it was impossible for the nobleman to understand the place, because he knew not to whom the description belonged; as appears by his asking Philip—"I pray "thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of him-"self, or of some other man?"

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This great leading question in the interpretation of the Scriptures, Philip will teach us how to answer; who, having waited all this time to hear his new disciple read the passage, and propose his difficulties upon it, now at length "opened his mouth, "and began at the same Scripture, and preached "unto him JESUS"—may we not suppose, without presumption, in words to the following effect—

Be not surprised to find, that you cannot, without assistance, attain to a right understanding of the ancient prophecies, seeing you want that key which alone can open them, and admit you to a discernment of the holy mysteries they contain. For prophecy, being not the word of man, but given by inspiration of the Spirit of God, terminates not in the temporary affairs of this world, but extends to the eternal concerns of another and better life, leading men to that dispensation of love and mercy which is now about to be unfolded to you.

Know, then, that the prophet Isaiah, in the passage before us, is by no means speaking of *himself*, or his own private sufferings, but those of *another man*, in whom the whole world is interested; and who is mentioned by him elsewhere under the title of IMMANUEL, or GOD WITH US; that divine Person, ordained from the beginning to reverse the sad effects of the fall of Adam, which you read of in the books of Moses, and to be the Redeemer of mankind from sin and sorrow, from death temporal and eternal. This Person, the object of the faith and hope of the people of God in all ages, prefigured in the law, foretold by the prophets, and celebrated in the

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Psalms, the Messiah of the Jews, and the desire of all nations, of whose appearing, as at this time, a general expectation prevails among both, has accordingly been manifested in the flesh, to fulfil all that was written of him; and having kept the law of man, and suffered death for his transgression of it, he arose again on the third day, and ascended into heaven, from whence he sent down his Spirit to establish his kingdom among the Gentiles by the preaching of that Gospel which the Jews have rejected, expelling those charged with the publication of it out of their coasts.

The behaviour of this stubborn and stiff-necked people, who, as they crucified the Master, never cease to persecute his servants, forces us to cry out in the words spoken by the prophet in spirit so long before; Lord, who, among thy once faithful people Israel, hath believed our report concerning the manifestation of thy Christ; and to whom hath this arm of Jehovah, this mighty power of God, been revealed by our ministry, to the purposes of salvation?

You may wonder, perhaps, what could induce them to reject their Saviour, whom they were all along taught by their own Scriptures to expect. It was the poverty and humility in which he came to visit us, so contrary to their modern, proud, and carnal conceits. For this being the season of his humiliation for our sins, he grew up, as Isaiah here describes him, small and of no reputation, from a family nearly extinct, like a tender plant springing unnoticed from its root hidden in a barren and dry land, out of which nothing eminent was expected to arise. In the manner of his appearance he had no form nor

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comeliness, none of the advantages of worldly grandeur, no ornaments of state to set him off; and when we saw him with our outward eyes, there was no beauty that we should desire him; his visage was so marred by sufferings more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men. For the usage he met with from the world was even more discouraging than his poor and lowly appearance. He was despised and rejected of the men he came to save: all his life long a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, his bosom friend and companion night and day, during his pilgrimage upon earth. Unheeded and unregarded he walked amongst us, while we, not discerning his glory through the veil of flesh cast over it, hid as it were our faces from him, and would none of his company; but finding him despised by the many and the great, we esteemed him not, for the very reason which ought to have made him most dear unto us. For surely the griefs he bare, and the sorrows he carried, were not his own, but ours; yet we, not considering for whom he suffered, did esteem him the outcast of heaven and earth, stricken in just judgement from above, smitten of God in his anger, and afflicted by his heavy displeasure. And indeed he was wounded, but it was for our transgressions; he was bruised, but our iniquities bruised him; the chastisement he underwent procured our peace; and the stripes inflicted on his pure and innocent body, were as balm to heal the wounds of our polluted and guilty souls. Our sins were the true cause of his sorrows. All we, the wretched sons of wretched Adam, like sheep ever ready to wander from the fold,

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have gone astray; we have turned from the only right way, the path of God's commandments, every one to his own evil way; and the merciful Lord, instead of punishing us, laid on him the iniquities of us all; a burden, which the world could not have sustained a moment. He, the Son of God, himself, was sore oppressed and afflicted with it; his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. But his love to man was invincible, burning and shining amidst a sea of troubles unutterable; all the waves of affliction, which broke over him, could not quench it, neither could the floods of Belial drown it. His resolution to save us, like a branch of the victorious palm, received strength from the weight laid upon it. He could have commanded the armies of heaven to have attended him in a moment; but thus it behoved Christ to suffer; and therefore the inhabitants of the regions of glory, instead of vindicating his innocence, taught the church of the redeemed to adore his passion; which, bitter as it was, (for never was sorrow like unto his sorrow!) extorted not one repining or complaining word from him. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted; yet he opened not his mouth. He was brought to the cross, all meekness and quietness, as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers, that liveliest portraiture of resigned innocence, is dumb, so opened he not his mouth before his malicious persecutors. In his humiliation his judgement was taken away; the Judge of all the earth was condemned by one who acknowledged him to be guiltless; and though a person of such high and unspeakable dignity, that neither

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men nor angels can declare the manner of his generation, yet he shared with us the lot of mortality, and tasted death for every man; he was cut off from the land of the living, for the transgression of the people was he smitten. He, whose style is, "the "Lord our Righteousness," died with the wicked; and the possessor of heaven and earth was beholden to the rich for a grave. Although he had done no violence, neither was there deceit in his mouth, for in his person mercy and truth met together; yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him, as one made sin for us, though he himself knew no sin; he hath put him to grief, that we might rejoice evermore, seeing he made his soul an offering, and was accepted of the Father, as a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. Accordingly, the debt man had contracted being discharged, his substitute was released from the prison of the grave, and ascended into his glory, where he reaps the fruit of his labours. For now he sees his seed, the generation of the faithful converts adopted into his family and made his children; he has prolonged his days and those of his spiritual offspring, for ever and ever; and the pleasure of the Lord, the work of man's salvation, prospers gloriously in his hands. He sees the numerous issue of the travail of his soul in those bitter pangs it endured upon the cross; and esteeming it an ample recompense for them all, is satisfied, and filled with joy. By the knowledge of his heavenly doctrine, to be preached in all the world, shall the righteous servant of Jehovah justify an innumerable multitude of all



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nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, who, like the spangles of early dew, or the stars of the firmament, shall shine evermore by communications of his glory: for he has borne their iniquities, and done away their sins. Therefore, the multitudes of the nations are given him for the portion of his inheritance, and the strong and mighty kingdoms of the world, rescued from the tyranny of Satan, shall become his; because for them, though they knew him not, he hath poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with transgressors and malefactors, and bare the sin of Adam and all his posterity; and being hereby exalted to the throne of God, there continueth for ever to make intercession for you, and for me, and for all transgressors.—

This view of things so affected the nobleman, and the love of his Saviour thus dying for him took such entire possession of his soul, that when, by the direction of the same good Providence that superintended this whole affair, "they came," as they journeyed on, "to a certain water, he said," in transport, "See, "here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized" into the name of this Jesus whom thou preachest? "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine "heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus is the Son of God. And he "commanded the chariot to stand still; and they went "down both into the water, both Philip and the eu-"nuch, and he baptized him. And when they were "come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord "caught away Philip, and the eunuch saw him no "more." How careful ought we to be to snatch,

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and improve to the utmost, every opportunity of making our calling and election sure! how watchful, lest the day of salvation pass unheeded away, and the Sun of Righteousness set upon our impenitence and unbelief! Philip had other work in great abundance to do, and one sermon had converted the nobleman. "He went on his way rejoicing," full of joy in the Holy Ghost; and he who came from Ethiopia, Lord Treasurer to queen Candace, made his entrance into it again in a far different character, that of an apostle of Jesus Christ; for as such, the ecclesiastical historians inform us, he was commissioned to preach the Gospel to his countrymen, the truth of which he finally sealed with his blood [a]. In heaven he again beholds the face of his own pastor and father in Christ. Numbered with the saints of the Most High in glory everlasting, with what pleasure do they now look back upon the time they spent together in the chariot over the 53d chapter of Isaiah; that small portion of time, productive of so much never-ending joy and comfort to them both!

And now let us make a suitable application of this delightful and profitable part of sacred story.

When, therefore, we behold this great man laying aside the cares of state, turning his back on the pomps and vanities of a court, and setting out from a far distant land to pay a visit to the temple at Jerusalem, learn we duly to prize the inestimable blessings of church communion. The hill of Sion is a fair place, the joy of the whole earth. On its top, silent and

[a] Jortin's Remarks on Eccles. Hist. vol. i. p. 304.



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refreshing as the dew, descend the influences of heaven, and the benedictions of eternity: at its foot break forth the fresh springs of divine grace, sending abroad the waters of comfort into every land. The Lord hath chosen Sion to be a habitation for himself; he hath reared his throne of glory in the midst of her, and made her to be the residence of his Spirit. The Lord is in his holy temple. There will he be found of such as diligently seek him: there is he to be worshipped with holy worship: there is offered the morning and evening sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving, rendered acceptable through the meritorious righteousness of the Redeemer, that sweet incense which accompanies the prayers of all saints to the throne of grace: there the light of evangelical doctrine goeth not out: and there is set forth the shew-bread of eternal life. Who can wonder at the melting strains poured forth by devout and holy souls, excluded, in calamitous times, from a participation of such invaluable privileges? "O "how amiable are thy dwellings, thou Lord of "hosts! My soul longeth, ye even fainteth, for the "courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out "for the living God." How happy is our lot, who have not a journey from Ethiopia to take, in order to worship at Jerusalem, but hear the daily call of the church sounding in our ears, "Come unto him "all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and he will "give you rest." Blessed are they who know the joyful sound, and suffer no indulgence, no amusement, no employment, to prevent their accepting so friendly and so loving an invitation.

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Let a sight of this nobleman's great love of the Scriptures, thus rewarded by a manifestation of the Messiah to him, stir us up to aspire after the same reward, by a like ardent desire of understanding those holy books, which, when understood, will not fail to lead us to Christ. "He is the end of the law: "and to him give all the prophets witness:" so that whether Philip had found the nobleman reading in one or the other, he would have "begun at the same "Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus." And the minister of Christ, who writes after his copy, shall do well. He may not, perhaps, be able to explain the whole: but shall he therefore explain none? He may err in the interpretation of particulars, and fancy he finds Christ where he is not to be found: but is not this better than, by ceasing to interpret, to preclude the possibility of finding him where he certainly is? If the doctrine deduced be according to the analogy of faith, the sermon will be edifying, even although the exposition should not be quite exact, as is often the case in the homilies of the Fathers; which, with all their inaccuracies, no one can read without being a better man; because, whatever part of the Scriptures be the subject, the reader is always sure to find some point of Christian faith or practice explained and enforced. But if the application of the Scriptures to Christ and the concerns of his church be rejected, because some are unskilful in making it, an argument is drawn from the abuse of a thing against its use; the opinion and practice of the church for 1700 years set aside; the Bible sealed up; and the Christian commences Jew; for what is the cha-

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racteristic and fundamental error of that unhappy people, but the not discerning Jesus of Nazareth in the Scriptures of the Old Testament? If the ministers of the Gospel would make the hearts of their hearers to burn within them, it must be by an imitation of their blessed Master, who wrought that effect on the two disciples going to Emmaus, by "expounding unto them in all the Scriptures the "things concerning HIMSELF—Did not our heart "burn within us, while he talked within us by the "way, and while he OPENED to us the SCRIPTURES?" Permit me to recite a short passage from the writings of the learned and pious bishop Andrews, who thus accounts for the synonymous use of the words *prophesying* and *preaching*, in the New Testament language. "We," says he, that is, the ministers of the Christian church, "do prophesy, as it were, the "meaning of ancient prophecies: not make any new, "but interpret the old well: take off the veil from "Moses's face; find Christ and the mysteries of the "Gospel under the types of the law; apply the old "prophecies, so as it may appear that the spirit of "prophecy is the testimony of JESUS. And he is "the best prophet now that can do this best[h]."

But the history we have been considering recommends more particularly to our frequent perusal, and deepest meditations, that portion of holy writ which was made the instrument, in St. Philip's hands, of bringing the Ethiopian nobleman to the knowledge and faith of Christ, the 53d chapter of Isaiah; a

[h] Serm. on Acts, ii. 26, et seq.

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chapter, no less remarkable for the mighty and wonderful change effected by it in the heart of another nobleman, of our own country. For in the sermon preached at the funeral of that extraordinary sinner, and as extraordinary penitent, the earl of Rochester, we find the following striking and affecting relation: "This estate of mind continued till the 53d chapter "of Isaiah was read to him, wherein there is a lively "description of the sufferings of our Saviour, and "the benefits thereof; by the power and efficacy of "which, assisted by his Holy Spirit, God so wrought "upon his heart, that he declared the mysteries "of the passion appeared as plain to him, as ever "any thing did that was represented in a glass; so "that the joy and admiration, which possessed his "soul upon the reading God's words to him, was "remarkable to all about him; and he had so much "delight in his testimonies, that he begged the same "might be read to him frequently; and was unsatis-"fied, notwithstanding his great pains and weakness, "till he had learned the 53d chapter of Isaiah with-"out book." Let us therefore at all seasons, but more especially at the present, by a frequent perusal of this wonderful chapter, recollect our thoughts, and compose our spirits, and soften our hearts, and mortify our passions, and fix our affections on him who loved us, and for our sakes fasted, and mourned, and wept, and lived poor, and died forsaken. "Let "us also go," as St. Thomas once said, "that we may "die with him;" that being baptized in the baptism of repentance, as the eunuch was by Philip in the water, we may die to sin, and arise, as he did, to

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newness of life, with our understandings prepared to receive, our hearts to love, and our tongues to publish the truth; our hands to work out our salvation, and our feet to run with delight the way of God's commandments, though it lead us through the valley of the shadow of death. Thus we shall go on our way to heaven rejoicing in hope, and become patient and resigned under all the tribulations we can suffer for our hope's sake. A mournful *Lent* shall terminate in a joyful *Easter;* and every tear be wiped away at the resurrection of the just; when we shall meet St. Philip and his convert, with all those who, having performed their appointed penance in this world, are admitted to the communion of the church triumphant; to which God of his infinite mercy vouchsafe to bring us all, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of sinners, the end of the law, and the fulness of the Gospel.

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# DISCOURSE XVI.

## JESUS RISEN.

LUKE, XXIV. 34.

*The Lord is risen indeed.*

OUR meditations, for this week past, have been employed on the sorrows and sufferings of the Son of God, undergone for the sins of the world. We have viewed him sold, betrayed, denied, mocked, scourged, reviled, and evil entreated, crowned with thorns, and nailed to the cross; from thence taken down, and laid in the grave, as a man that had been long dead; a large stone placed at the mouth of the sepulchre, properly sealed, and the watch carefully set. During the solemn commemoration of those days, in which the Bridegroom was thus taken away, the mirth of tabrets hath ceased, and the noise of them that rejoice hath given place to the penitential accents of grief and lamentation. For a little season, even the sacred music of the church hath not been heard; but her harp also, like that of holy Job, "hath been turned to mourning, and her organ into "the voice of them that weep[a];" while either, with

[a] Job, xxx. 31.

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one of the Maries, she hath stood under the cross, or watched, with the other, at the grave of her Lord.

But as a woman, who in her travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come, yet afterward remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world; with such unfeigned exultation do we on this day celebrate the second birth of the holy Jesus from the tomb; by which he realized to his desponding disciples, in a peculiar manner, one of his own beatitudes; "Blessed are they that mourn, for they "shall be comforted!" Blessed are they, who have mourned for the death of Christ, and the sins which occasioned it; for they are the persons who will be comforted by the tidings of his resurrection; their sorrow will indeed be turned into joy, when they hear that their warfare is accomplished, that their iniquity is pardoned; since he who died for their sins, is risen again for their justification. Deservedly, therefore, hath this ever been esteemed the queen of festivals, worthy to give laws to the rest, to appear at the head of the holy band, crowned with everlasting joy, and hailed by incessant hallelujahs. For now it well becometh us to obey that injunction, issued of old from the Lord, by his prophet Isaiah; "Sing, "O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it; shout, "ye lower parts of the earth, break forth into sing-"ing, ye mountains, O forest and every tree there-"in; for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glori-"fied himself in Israel[b]." Let songs of praise, there-

[b] Isa. xliv. 23.

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fore, fill the heavens, from the comforted spirits of just men made perfect, of patriarchs, and prophets, and saints, upon this triumph of their God whom they waited for. Let the inhabitants of the earth diffuse in loud acclamations the glorious name of the mighty Conqueror, who, by *his* resurrection, hath procured and given an earnest of their own. Let mount Sion and all her sister churches break forth into singing, and utter the praises of him who hath delivered them from the curse of the law, and from the guilt of sin, and from the power of the second death, as well as from the dominion of the first. Let the Gentile world, and every tree of righteousness planted therein, burst out into fruits of praise and thanksgiving for this great manifestation of the power and glory of God in the redemption of our nature from the grave. Such be the joy produced in heaven and in earth, among angels and men, Jews and Gentiles, by the tidings of this day, "The "Lord is risen indeed."

The province allotted me at present is, to display the grounds and reasons of this general joy, or to state the evidence for the fact which gives occasion to it, namely, the resurrection of Jesus our Lord from the dead; which being the key-stone of the Christian fabric, and the foundation of all our hopes, it must always be a task no less profitable than delightful, to establish so important and comfortable a doctrine upon its proper basis.

The evidence for the resurrection of Christ is of two kinds, predictive and historical. From the Old Testament it appears that Messiah was to rise; from

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the New, that Jesus of Nazareth did rise, and therefore is the Messiah.

Among the predictive witnesses, the first place is due to that ancient and venerable order of men, styled Patriarchs, or heads of families, whose lives and actions, as well as their words, were descriptive of the person in faith of whom they lived and acted, instructing, interceding for, and conducting their dependents, as representative prophets, priests, and kings; looking forward unto the Author and Finisher of their faith and ours, who, by dying and rising again, was to exhibit to the world the divine fulness of all these characters; to teach, to atone, to reign; to bruise the serpent's head; to comfort the sons of Adam concerning the work and toil of their hands; to gather and to bless the nations. The extraordinary incidents, with which the history of these holy persons aboundeth, the frequent revolutions of their affairs from the depth of adversity to the height of prosperity, brought about by the remarkable interpositions of Heaven in their favour, naturally direct our attention to parallel circumstances in the after dispensations of God, to which foregoing ones were designed to bear testimony. In this light, the history of Isaac, intentionally offered in sacrifice, and received again from the dead in a figure; of Joseph, suffering persecution from his brethren, and by them sold into the hands of strangers, but afterwards taken from prison and from judgement, exalted to power and honour, and becoming the preserver of men; and, under the Mosaic dispensation, the history of David, anointed to the kingdom, but wading through

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a sea of troubles and sorrows to the poessssion of it; of Samson arising at midnight, dismantling the fortifications of the city where he was confined as a prisoner, and leading captivity captive; together with the accounts of many other temporal saviours and deliverers raised up to Israel in time of need, to rescue them from the oppression of their enemies; all these histories have been, from the beginning, considered as bearing an aspect to the exaltation of mankind from misery and shame to felicity and glory, through the sufferings and resurrection of the Son of God, the Champion of the church, and Redeemer of the world. And, considered in this view, they will always afford matter of instruction, of wonder, and delight, to the pious and discerning Christian.

In the class of the predictive witnesses of our Lord's resurrection, the second place is claimed by the Law. Nor will its claim be disputed by any one who shall reflect, that it prophesied until John, executing the office of a schoolmaster, to lead men, by material elements and rudiments, to an apprehension of the spiritual ideas signified and conveyed thereby, until the Baptist succeeded it in that office; who, pointing to Jesus as he walked, spake the language of its institutions, when he said, "Behold the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the "world." And indeed, when, after the sacramental atonement made by the death of the innocent victim, we see the Levitical high priest arrayed in the garments of glory and beauty; when we behold him purifying all the parts of the figurative tabernacle with blood, and then entering, within the veil, into the

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holiest of all, to present that propitiating blood before the offended Majesty of heaven: is it possible, even though an apostle had not applied all these circumstances for us, to detain the imagination a moment from fixing itself on the great High Priest of our profession; the plenary satisfaction made on the cross; his resurrection in an immortal body, no more to stand charged with sin, no more to see corruption; the purification of the church by his precious blood; his ascension into heaven, and intercession for us in the presence of God? Again, when we read the command given to the priest, that on the morrow after the sabbath he should wave a sheaf of the first fruits[c], as an earnest and sanctification of the future harvest; doth it not immediately suggest to us, that on the same day, on the morrow after the sabbath, Christ arose from the dead, and became the first-fruits of them that slept, the sanctification and earnest of that harvest which shall be at the end of the world; at which time he, who, in the days of his flesh, went on weeping, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, bearing forth the precious seed of the word of life, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him? Nor can we, it is apprehended, peruse the account of the flowering rod of Aaron, deposited in the most holy place, for a perpetual memorial of the investiture of the priesthood in him and his family[d], without being led to reflect on the ascertainment of the eternal Melchisedekian priesthood to the person of Christ, by the reflorescence

[c] Levit. xxiii. 11. [d] See Numb. xvii.

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of that mortal part which he drew from the stem of Jesse, and which hath now taken up its residence in heaven itself, being an everlasting memorial to God and man, of the true and availing priesthood and intercession of the holy Jesus.

Next to the Patriarchs and the Law, the Prophets press for admittance, to deliver their testimony; "for the testimony of Jesus," as saith the angel in the Revelation, "is the spirit of prophecy[e]." Some of these give their evidence in the ancient way of figure and emblem; others, with less reserve, in express literal declarations. Of the former kind is that of Jonah, devoted for the safety of the vessel in which he sailed, detained three days in what he styleth "the "belly of hell," and then restored to the world again, to preach repentance to the Heathen; circumstances too plain and striking to need any comment, after that given by our Lord himself: "As Jonas was three "days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall "the Son of man be three days and three nights in "the heart of the earth[f]." Of a like nature is that vision of Zechariah[g], in which he seeth Joshua the high priest clothed with filthy garments, which are taken from him, and he is clothed with change of raiment, and other sacerdotal ornaments, denoting the purity and glory of Christ, when our iniquity passed from him, and he arose, without sin, unto salvation. And thus again, the prophecy of Haggai, that the "glory of the latter house should be greater "than that of the former[h]," is as true of the temple of

[e] Rev. xix. 10. [f] Matt. xii. 40. [g] See Zechar. iii.
[h] Haggai, ii. 9.

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our Lord's body, after his resurrection, compared with that before his death, as it is of the second material temple, compared with the first, on account of the presence of God incarnate in the one, which was not in the other. Hosea delivers a prediction of the restoration of the church then oppressed and afflicted, in terms literally applicable to the virtual resurrection of the members in the Head of the church.— "Come and let us return unto the Lord; for he "hath torn; and he will heal us; he hath smitten, "and he will bind us up; after two days he will re-"vive us; in the third day he will raise us up, and "we shall live in his sight[i]." But Isaiah is very explicit, and saith, in the person of Christ addressing himself to the church; "Thy dead men shall "live, together with my dead body shall they arise: "awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for "thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall "cast out the dead[k]." And elsewhere, discoursing of the Messiah, he foretelleth expressly, that "when "he had made his soul an offering for sin, he should "see his seed, he should prolong his days, and the "pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hands: "that he should see of the travail of his soul, and "be satisfied: that because he had poured out his "soul unto death, God would afterwards give him "a portion with the great[l]." I shall close the predictive evidence with the famous passage from the 16th Psalm: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell,

[i] Hosea, vi. 1, 2. [k] Isa. xxvi. 19. [l] Isa. liii.

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"neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see cor-
"ruption: thou wilt show me the path of life;" where, as St. Peter assureth us, in his sermon, Acts, ii. David spake not in his own person, but "being a "prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an "oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according "to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit upon "his throne; he seeing this before, spake of the re-"surrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in "hell, neither did his flesh see corruption."

A fact of so extraordinary a nature as the resurrection of a body from the dead, predicted, as we have seen, at sundry times and in divers manners, by the patriarchs, the law, and the prophets, cannot be supposed to have happened without sufficient witnesses of its accomplishment. These are now to be collected, and made to pass in due order before us.

And first, we shall cite heaven and earth to give in their evidence; for both of them perceived the power of their Lord at his rising, and both proclaimed it to the inhabitants of the world, by those awful signs and appearances which ushered in the morning of the resurrection. At the time fore-appointed in the divine counsels, "the angel of the Lord de-"scended from heaven," bringing with him a strange and more glorious day-spring, his brightness covering the heavens, and enlightening the world. "His "countenance," saith St. Matthew, "was like light-"ning, and his raiment white as snow;" all purity, and joy, and triumph, and glory. At this manifestation



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of splendour and majesty from heaven, the earth trembled and quaked, as declaring itself unable any longer to detain the body which had been committed to it for a little season. "Behold, there was a great "earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended "from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone "from the door, and sat upon it." At the instant of this universal commotion, the blessed Jesus awaking right early from that which was but a sleep to him, and will be no more to us who believe in him, left the bed of death. He arose, and came forth, almighty, all glorious, fresh as the light of the morning, as a bridegroom proceeding out of his chamber, as a strong man prepared to run his course; and saying, or seeming to say, "I am he that liveth, and "was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore[m]."

The next witnesses which appear in favour of the resurrection are the holy angels. For as the devout women, who came betimes in the morning, with a pious but needless care, to perform the last instance of duty and affection to the body of their Lord, were much perplexed at what they saw, lo, two of the inhabitants of heaven, ever rejoicing to minister to the heirs of salvation, appeared in robes of glory, and reproved them for expecting to find their Master among the tombs, as if it were possible that he should be holden of death, who was to give life to all. "Why seek ye the living among the "dead? He is not here, he is risen. Remember

[m] Rev. i. 18.

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"how he spake unto you, when he was yet in Ga-
"lilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into
"the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the
"third day rise again[n]." As if they had said, "How
"long will ye be ignorant of the divine dispensations
"concerning the Messiah, and continue seeking the
"Lord of life in the regions of death? He died, in-
"deed, unto sin once, as he told you he should; but
"do you not bear in mind what he told you at the
"same time, that, after payment of the debt, he
"should be released from prison, naming the very
"day of his discharge, the third day, which is now
"come? He is risen, as he said; and being so risen,
"he dieth no more, death hath no more dominion
"over him, nor hath he any farther connexions with
"mortality." The same heavenly messengers were seen by Mary Magdalen in the sepulchre, arrayed in white, and sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. The grave was now rendered a scene of joy and triumph, where Christ had overcome the sharpness of death; and where, from thenceforth, the bodies of the faithful rest in peace, under the care of Heaven, till the general resurrection; when they shall become as the angels of God, and shall "walk with him in
"white[o]."

As one set of witnesses descended from above, to bear testimony to the resurrection of Jesus, so others ascended, for the same purpose, from the lower parts

[n] Luke, xxiv. 5. [o] Rev. iii. 4.



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of the earth. For "many bodies of saints which "slept, arose, and came out of their graves after his "resurrection, and went into the holy city, and ap-"peared unto many[p]." The astonishment produced in Jerusalem by the sudden appearance of these new and unexpected evidences, is more easily conceived than expressed. We may only observe, that if this fact had not been as the Gospel represents it, it must have exposed the inventors of the tale to utter scorn and contempt, and proved the ruin of the cause which it was intended to support.

But it is time to allege the many appearances of Christ himself, after his resurrection, to Mary Magdalen apart; to the other devout women with her; to the two going to Emmaus; to St. Peter, to St. James, to the eleven; to "about five hundred brethren at "once;" to St. Stephen, just before his martyrdom; and to St. Paul, at his conversion. And so far were these witnesses of the appearances of Christ from being credulous, that they were altogether sceptical; God having in a wonderful manner provided for the confirmation of our faith, by suffering them to doubt. For not only the reports of those who had seen him were disbelieved by those who had not, but when he represented himself in the midst of the eleven, they could not credit their own senses. And when all the rest were convinced, Thomas still stood out, till ocular and palpable demonstration forced from him that ever-memorable confession, My Lord and my

[p] Matth. xxvii. 52.

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God! "Thus was there no capacity of mankind, no "time, no place, but had visible proof of the resur-"rection of Christ. He appeared to men and wo-"men, to clergy and laity, to sinners of both sexes; "to weak men and to criminals, to doubters and de-"niers, at home and abroad, in public and in pri-"vate, in their houses and their journeys, unexpected "and by appointment, betimes in the morning and "late at night, to his disciples in conjunction and to "them in dispersion, when they did look for him "and when they did not; he appeared upon earth "to many, and to St. Paul and St. Stephen from "heaven. So that we can require no greater "testimony than all these are able to give us, "who saw for themselves and for us too, that "the faith and certainty of the resurrection of Je-"sus might be conveyed to all ages and gene-"rations."

To enable the apostles thus to convey it, the Spirit of truth himself set his seal to this article of our creed, by coming down upon them on the day of Pentecost, and bestowing on them wisdom to teach, power to confirm, and patience to suffer for the doctrine of the resurrection, until, converted by their preaching, the nations of the earth bore universal testimony to the reality thereof. For that "a religion "which taught men to be meek and humble, dis-"posed to receive injuries, but not to do any; a re-"ligion which gave countenance to the poor and "lowly, at a time when riches were adored, and am-"bition and pleasure had possessed the hearts of all

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"mankind; that such a religion in such an age, by "the sermons and conduct of fishermen, men of "mean breeding and illiberal arts, should so speedily "triumph over the philosophy of the world, and the "arguments of the subtle, and the discourses of the "eloquent; the power of princes and the interests "of state, the inclinations of nature and the blind-"ness of zeal, the force of custom and the solici-"tation of passion, the pleasures of sin and the busy "arts of the devil; that is, against wit and power, "superstition and wilfulness, fame and money, na-"ture and empire, which are all the causes in this "world that can make a thing impossible; this, this "is to be ascribed to the power of God, and is the "great demonstration of the resurrection of Jesus. "Every thing was an argument for it, and improved "it; no objection could hinder it, no enemies de-"stroy it; whatsoever was for it made the religion "to increase; whatsoever was against it made it to "increase. If the Christians had peace, they went "abroad and brought in converts; if they had per-"secution, the converts came in to them. In pro-"sperity they allured and enticed the world by the "beauty of holiness, in affliction and trouble they "amazed all men with the splendour of their inno-"cence, and the glories of their patience. Quickly "therefore it was, that the world became disciple to "the glorious Nazarene; and men could no longer "doubt of the resurrection of Jesus, when it became "demonstrated by the certainty of those who saw it, "and the courage of those who died for it, and the

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"multitude of those who believed it; who by their "sermons and their actions, by their public of-"fices and discourses, by festivals and sacraments, "by arguments of sense and experience, by rea-"son and religion, by persuading rational men, "and establishing believing Christians, by their liv-"ing in the obedience, and dying for the tes-"timony of Jesus, have greatly advanced his king-"dom, and his power, and his glory, into which "he entered, upon his resurrection from the "dead[q]."

Thus we have taken such a view, as the usual time allotted to discourses of this kind will allow us to take, of the evidence for our Lord's resurrection, predictive and historical; to the completion of which, it is hard to conceive any thing wanting, unless it were the testimony of the adversary to the truth of the disputed fact, by the futility of an objection started to overthrow it. And with this proof likewise the Roman guard, under the direction of the Jewish rulers, has thought proper to furnish us. "The dis-

[q] Bishop TAYLOR'S *Moral Demonstration of the Truth of Christianity*, republished, since this Discourse was written, by a learned and amiable prelate of our church. May it meet with the success it deserves; for no tract ever came from the pen of man better calculated to dispel those doubts and difficulties which may arise in the mind of a believer, or to work conviction and conversion in that of the unbeliever, who can bring himself to give it a fair and attentive perusal. This has ever appeared to me to be its true character, since the hour when, with equal surprise and pleasure, I first met with it, where it so long lay hidden from the fashionable world, in the *Ductor Dubitantium*.

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"ciples," say they, "came by night, and stole him "away, while we slept." The *disciples* came and stole the body! They who all forsook their Master at his apprehension, and fled; they who from that time had absconded, for fear of the Jews, without hope, without courage, without contrivance, became all at once subtile in council, and daring in execution. They projected a plan to displace the guard, break the seal, remove the stone, and rescue the body, in order to persuade the world, that their Master was risen from the dead. And all this they effected, not with the precipitation of men engaged in a bad design, who feared a discovery, and would therefore have hastily seized the body, wrapped as it was in the sepulchral vestments; but with all the composed sedulity of domestics, carefully disentangling it from the linen clothes, and then depositing them in the exactest order. It is now proper to inquire where were the soldiers appointed to watch the sepulchre, all this while? What were they doing? The answer is ready; they were asleep. Notwithstanding the rigour of the Roman discipline, and the care that would doubtless be taken to select proper men upon this great occasion, yet the disciples came and stole the body, "while they slept." But did they indeed sleep? Did they all sleep? Determine then, ye Jews and infidels, what degree of credit is due to the testimony of men concerning what happened, when, by their own confession, they were asleep! This idle tale, which thus carries its own confutation with it, could have been the offspring only of a corrupt and

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infatuated Sanhedrim, to whom the watch told what had happened—not that the disciples came and stole the body while they slept—but that, while they were half dead with fear, at beholding the heavens around them in a blaze of glory, and feeling the earth under them trembling from its centre, the Galilean arose from the dead, to the confusion of all his enemies. But to stifle this evidence, and prevent the report from spreading, the soldiers had *large money* given them by the chief priests (and indeed the work deserved the wages) to propagate a story so absurd and shameless, that, instead of invalidating the truth of the resurrection, it is of itself sufficient to make any man believe it, who was before determined to the contrary.

If, therefore, the patriarchs, the law, and the prophets; if heaven and earth; if angels from above, and the dead from beneath; if the appearances of Christ himself on earth and from heaven; if the Spirit of truth, with all his gifts and graces; if the miracles of the apostles, the lives of the saints, the sufferings of confessors, and the deaths of martyrs; if the conversion of the world to the faith of a crucified Saviour, without power, wealth, or learning; if the church, with the antiquity, universality, and consent of her institutions and services for above seventeen centuries, from the day on which Christ was first seen by the eleven after his resurrection, to this hour in which we are now assembled for the commemoration of it; and lastly, if the objections of the adversary establishing the truth which they were intended to

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subvert; that is to say, in one word, if all the evidence which God can give, or man receive, be sufficient to prove a matter of fact; then may we evermore rejoice, and evermore let us therefore rejoice, in all the glorious consequences of the proposition in the text—"the Lord is risen indeed."

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# DISCOURSE XVII.

## THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY.

PHILIPPIANS, III. 20, 21.

*From whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*

THE text treats of a most amazing change to be one day wrought in the bodies of men, as also of the person who is to effect it, namely, our Lord Jesus Christ. And indeed, "we trusted it had been he "who should have redeemed Israel" from all his troubles. But are we "strangers in Jerusalem, "and know not the things that have come to pass "there in these days;" that this same Jesus, falsely accused, through envy, by the nobles of Judah, has been cast into the den of lions, with a stone brought and laid upon the mouth of the den, and sealed with a signet, that the purpose might not be changed concerning him[a], nor any possibility remain

[a] Dan. vi. 17.

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of his escaping from thence? In this state, he is by no means able to perform the great work ascribed to him in the text. For it must be observed, that though he be indeed God over all, he is not the *Saviour*, without his *humanity*. Though the raising the dead be an act of omnipotence, and consequently one which must be wrought by his Divinity, yet it is not Jesus Christ that does it, unless the Divinity does it in Jesus. And thus the text runs—"We "look for the Saviour, *the Lord Jesus*." But from whence do we look for him? From the sepulchre? No; from heaven; "Our conversation is in *heaven*, "from *whence* we look for the Saviour." Surely, then, "the God whom he served has delivered him "from the power of the lions[b]." Surely, "the King "has sent and delivered him, the Prince of the peo-"ple has let him go free[c]." "He is escaped as a "bird out of a snare of the fowler: the snare is "broken, and he is delivered[d]," and fled away towards heaven. For how should a person, once laid in the grave, come from heaven, unless he were first risen, and ascended thither? Four days ago he was carried captive into the kingdom of death, and confined in that strong city the grave; and now we look for him to come from heaven. For thus doth the prophet Isaiah most magnificently describe him returning to his capital, from the land of the enemy, after his passion: "Who is this that cometh from Edom, "with dyed garments from Bozrah; this that is "glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness

[b] Dan. vi. 22. 27. [c] Psal. cv. 20. [d] Psal. cxxiv. 7.

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"of his strength? I who speak in righteousness "mighty to save[e]." Well therefore may we "look "for the Saviour from heaven," for there most certainly he is. And from thence, as the text affirms, he shall as certainly come to raise us. He who died on the cross to redeem, who rose from the sepulchre to justify, and who sent his Spirit from heaven to sanctify our souls, he, even he, shall come to glorify our bodies, and finish his work. And then shall we hear "from the throne the voice of mighty thunderings," saying, It is done. "I am Alpha and Omega, the "first and the last, the beginning and the end. I "will give unto him that is athirst of the water of life "freely." May we not, therefore, address the world in the words of Moses's divine song, and say, "Give "ear, O ye heavens, and he will speak: and hear, "O earth, the words of his mouth. His doctrine "shall drop as the rain, and his speech distil as the "dew[f]; for, as it is elsewhere written, his "dew is "as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out "the dead[g]." The dew, like himself, arises from earth, but we look for it from heaven; "from whence "also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, "who shall change our vile body, that it may be "fashioned like unto his glorious body, according "to the working, whereby he is able even to subdue "all things to himself."

Let us then consider Christ coming from heaven as a *Saviour*.

Man consists of two parts, both of which stand in

[e] Isa. lxiii. 1. [f] Deut. xxxii. 1. [g] Isa. xxvi. 19.

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need of a Saviour, because both fell, and became subject to the destroyer. The salvation here spoken of is plainly the salvation of the body, not excluding that of the soul, but perfective of it. For if Christ be here denominated a Saviour, because he comes to change the body, then is he here spoken of as the Saviour of the body which he comes to change. Now, a Saviour is one that delivers us from our enemies, as it is written—"He hath raised up an horn of *salvation* for us—that we should be saved from our enemies[h]." But the enemy that destroys the body is death, and therefore the body cannot be saved from that enemy without a resurrection, nor can Christ be its Saviour, unless he raise it from the dead. But the apostle here styles him the Saviour, with respect to the body; therefore he will be its "resurrection and its life, and whosoever believeth in him, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

Indeed, the work of redemption is left unfinished, if this be not the case. For notwithstanding the sufferings and resurrection of Christ, "the whole creation groaneth, and travaileth in pain together, until now; and not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body[i]." This, and this only, crowns and makes effectual the labour of a Redeemer. "For this end," says the apostle, "Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord, both of the dead and of the living[k]." And

[h] Luke, i. 69—71. [i] Rom. viii. 22. [k] Rom. xiv. 9.

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again, "he hath appointed a day in which he will "judge the world by that man whom he hath or-"dained; whereof he has given assurance unto all "men, in that he raised him from the dead[l]." Christ was incarnate that he might die, he died that he might rise, he rose that he might ascend, he ascended that he might take possession of his kingdom, and he took possession of his kingdom that he might raise the dead and judge the world. "The God of our fathers," says St. Peter "raised up Jesus, whom ye slew; him "hath God exalted with his right hand"—for what end?—"To be a Prince and a Saviour[m]." He, therefore, that has "done so great things for us already, "whereof we do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice," will never leave us in our enemies' hand, but "shall reign "till he has put all enemies under his feet;" and we know, "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is "Death."

Again, he who is eternal truth, and who promised to raise Christ, has promised to raise us. He has fulfilled one part of his promise, and therefore will accomplish the other.

Nor is this all. But such is the intimate union between Christ and us, that his resurrection in effect is ours; and we are looked upon by our heavenly Father as already risen in his beloved Son. For we must consider Christ as suffering and rising, not for himself alone, but for us. We must not view him as a private person, as a single individual, but as the representative and substitute of human nature, and of

[l] Acts, xvii. 31. [m] Acts, v. 30.

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all the persons in that nature; we must view him as the second Adam, containing in his loins all who are or shall be born of the will of God, of incorruptible seed, by spiritual regeneration; as in the loins of the first Adam lay all his posterity, afterwards born of the will of man, of corruptible seed, by natural generation. In this capacity, as surety and father of us all, he entered the grave, and lay under the arrest of death for our sin; and in this capacity he arose from the grave, and came forth, for our justification; that as "IN Adam all died, even so IN Christ should all "be made alive." The words, therefore, which he spake, are fulfilled; "Because I live, ye shall live "also[n]." For if Christ be risen in our nature, then our nature is risen in Christ; and if our nature be risen, then they who partake of that nature shall rise too. We are, as the apostle speaks, συμφυτοι, "planted "together in the likeness of his death," that we may grow together "in the likeness of his resurrection." He *for* us, and we *in* him; that "the same Spirit "which raised the Lord Jesus from the dead, may "also quicken our mortal bodies[o]." For who amongst us ever heard of a living head joined to dead members? Now that he is joined to us is most certain. For when the foot was bruised on earth, the head from heaven cried out, as sensible of the pain, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou ME?" The head, lifted up from the waters which had overwhelmed it, drew in the breath of the spirit of life, to enliven and invigorate every member of the body. And though

[n] John, xiv. 19. [o] Rom. viii. 11.

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the members are, as yet, wading through those waters, and, being covered with the waves, live only by their vital union with the exalted head, yet have they this promise, on which they may with confidence rely—"I, when I am lifted up, will draw all men unto "me[p]." The apostle observes, that "if any one "member be honoured, all the members rejoice with "it[q]." How much more must this be the case, when "the head is become as the most fine gold, "and on it are many crowns;" when "all the king-"doms of this world are become the kingdoms of our "Lord and his Christ;" which Christ is "the head "of the church, and he is the Saviour of the body." It is an acknowledged axiom, that as is the root, such are the branches. If then the root, though set in dry ground, yet, through the influences of heaven and the water of life, became full of immortality, how shall not the branches partake of that immortality, which the root receives only to bestow it upon them, as it is written; "The Father hath given to the "Son to have life in himself, that he should "give eternal life to as many as he hath given "him[r]." He is the root, we are the branches. He is the first begotten from the dead; therefore others, whom "he is not ashamed to call brethren," shall be begotten from the dead, and declared the sons of God, as he was, by their resurrection, and the power of the Almighty. Many other Scripture illustrations of the same point might be adduced; but these are sufficient. Well then might the apostle ar-

[p] John, xii. 32. [q] 1 Cor. xii. 6. [r] John, xvii. 2.



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gue, as he does, in that truly irrefragable manner; "Now, if Christ be preached, that he arose from "the dead, how say some among you, that there is "no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no "resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen; "and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching "vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are "found false witnesses of God; because we have "testified of God, that he raised up Christ, whom he "raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For "if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised. And "if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are "yet in your sins. Then they also, which are fallen "asleep in Christ, are perished. If in this life only "we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most "miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, "and become the first fruits of them that slept." The first fruits are presented by the great High Priest. "On the morning after the sabbath, he waved them "before Jehovah." Then the heavens were bowed, and the earth shook. And meet it was, when the sheaf of Joseph thus arose and stood upright, that every sheaf in the field should make obeisance[s]; that every knee should bow of things in heaven, and things on earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord[t]; that he is the *first fruits*, foreshowing, sanctifying, and ensuring that future harvest, which will be at the end of the world; that he is the first fruits of them that *slept*, and therefore that they who are in the graves "are not dead, but sleep;" and "if they

[s] Gen. xxxvii. 7 [t] Phil. ii. 10.

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"sleep in him, they shall do well." For yet a little while, and he will call from heaven to his people, saying in the words of his prophets—"Awake, and "sing, ye that dwell in the dust," and let the voice of melody be heard through all the chambers of the grave: "Awake up, my glory, awake lute and harp; "awake thou that sleepest; shake thyself from the "dust: awake, awake, utter a song; break forth into "joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem, "for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath "redeemed Jerusalem. Hath he said, and shall he "not do it? I will redeem them from death, I will "ransom them from the power of the grave; O death, "I will be thy plagues, O grave, I will be thy de-"struction. Repentance shall be hid from mine eyes. "I am Jehovah, and change not."

But how is this salvation to be effected? The text expresses it by a *change*; "Who shall change our "vile body." And otherwise than by a change from the state in which it is to one very different, the deliverance cannot be wrought; since the subject of it is a body now *vile*. In the original it is σωμα της ταπεινωσεως ημων *the body of our humiliation*. Humiliation implies a fall from some higher state. And such a fall our nature has sustained. For though the body of man was originally formed out of the earth, it was of the earth before the curse of corruption was inflicted upon it, yet "God created man to be *immortal*, and "made him an image of his own *eternity*." Other things were produced by the word of his power, but man by the counsel of the eternal Three, who said, "Let us make man." The workmanship ennobled



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the materials; the hand of the Almighty bestowed perfection as it passed upon them, and the creature rose under it, beautiful in his form, excellent in his glory, the most perfect image of his Maker. There was no seed of corruption within, to cause disease and deformity without; no contending passions in the soul, like moths to fret and wear out its garment the body. The soul, clothed with a spirit of holiness, was all glorious within, and could not but communicate some portion of its excellence to its earthly tabernacle, thereby rendering matter a fit companion for an upright spirit, breathed into it from above. God made not sin, neither hath he pleasure in the punishment of it. But man chose it. And behold what destruction it hath brought upon the earth, and upon our body formed out of it. What dreadful attendants has this ravisher of the world introduced! corruption, and shame, and misery, and trouble, and infirmity, and deformity, and sorrow, and death. The soul is become a sea, whereon the passions, like winds, strive for the mastery, shaking the earthly frame with divers diseases, and sundry kinds of death. It is now "a body of sin;" and what wonder, that it should be "a body of humiliation?" Sin has laid it low, even to the dust. Pamper it with the luxuries of sea and land, array it in gold and diamonds, it will be still the same. Only undraw the curtains of affliction, and you view it languishing upon the bed of sickness; unlock the doors of the grave, or enter the secret recesses of the charnel-house, and you behold it stripped of the world's tinsel pomps and vanities, reduced to putrid flesh, mouldering dust, and

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dry bones; no longer able to disguise or disown its original; brought at last to know itself, and introduced to an acquaintance proper for it, "earth to "earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust." Here then, O thou, whosoever thou art, that delightest to contemplate the dignity and rectitude of human nature, here sit down, and begin thy meditations. Is it thus, that virtue is its own reward? Or say, is the body no part of the man? If it be, why is it in this state? Or how is it to be changed? Men talk much of the *moral sense*. Can the *moral sense* acquaint us with the resurrection of the dead? *Reason* is placed on the throne, and her kingdom, it is said, ruleth over all. Can *reason* discover the change of corruption into glory? We know she cannot; and when she spake upon the subject at Athens, her language was, "What will this babbler say?"

Nay, since that time, we have heard her muttering from the dust, by the mouth of certain philosophers—"How are the dead raised up, and with what "body do they come?" With what body, O man, should they come, but the body with which they went? What body should be raised from the grave, but the body that was laid in the grave? Had we seen Joseph of Arimathea deposit the Redeemer of the world in a sepulchre, and been told that Redeemer should rise again, could any one have thought of asking, "with what body he should come?" whether with the body which he had when he went with his parents to Jerusalem, at twelve years old; or the body he had at twenty; or the body he had at thirty, when he began his ministry? Upon this subject two men,

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of equal abilities, might dispute, if they were to live so long, till Christ came in the clouds to judgement, and found them doubting whether he were risen or not, because they could not conceive with what body he should rise, or how it was consistent with the justice of God, to raise and reward one body only, when, as they apprehend, he was born in one body, lived in another, and suffered in a third; because it is said, the body undergoes a thorough change in a certain term of years. This metaphysical argument, therefore, though seemingly no more than a difficulty proposed as to the manner of our resurrection, really strikes at the truth of the article of Christ's resurrection, and is calculated to darken the counsel and revelation of the Most High by words without knowledge: so much without knowledge, that the plain matter of fact is a sufficient answer. Jesus Christ was laid in the sepulchre, and the same Jesus Christ arose out of the sepulchre. And if it were so with his natural body, why should it be otherwise with his mystical? The Scriptures are clear that it will not. For as they who are alive at Christ's coming, are to be "changed in the twinkling of an eye;" and, consequently, that body must be changed which is found at the instant of his coming, and no other; so they that are in their graves shall come forth to be changed likewise, and, consequently, those bodies only must be changed that were laid in the graves. "Who shall change our vile body," says the text: therefore the vile body must be there to be changed. Otherwise it would not be a *change*; μετασχηματισις a *transformation*, or *transfiguration*, of vile into

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glorious, but a *substitution* of glorious for vile, It is *this* mortal, and *this* corruptible; τουτο το θνητον; this very mass of mortality and corruption. "It is sown, "it is raised." The same, in short, may be said to these objectors, which Christ said to the Sadducees upon a like occasion; "Ye do greatly err, not know-"ing the Scriptures, nor the power of God." For if you knew the power of God, you would know that he *can* do it; and if you knew the Scriptures, you would know that he *will* do it. And if they say he will do it, all the objections in the world show but one thing, namely, "an evil heart of unbelief" in the objectors. For since the Scriptures (and particularly the process in Ezekiel's vision of the resurrection) plainly show that the body is first to be raised, and all the parts of it put together, before the change takes place, nothing remains, but an atheistical denial of *the power of God* to collect the parts, and put them together; a denial that he who made all things of impalpable dust, and beheld the substance of the world before two atoms of it were joined; who formed the body of man out of those created for that purpose, and dissolves and disperses them at pleasure; a denial that he can collect them again when dispersed; a denial that the Almighty can do this. Only suppose a man not ignorant of the power of God, and all difficulties vanish. For then, whether the dust lie quiet in the grave, or be blown to the four winds, or be entombed in a whale, or buried in the great deep, it is equally under the eye of the Omniscient, and the power of the Omnipotent. These are all the storehouses and repositories, to be opened

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by him who has the keys of hell and death, when the sea shall deliver up the dead that are in it; and death and hell shall deliver up the dead that are in them: when, as the same Jonas came out of the whale, and the same Son of man from the heart of the earth, so the same bodies of saints, that lay down at night, shall arise in the morning. God is not unrighteous, that he should forget the body's work and labour of love. From those eyes, which have poured forth tears of repentance, shall all tears be wiped, and they shall be blessed with the vision of the Almighty. Those hands which have been lifted up in prayer, and stretched out to the poor, shall hold the palm of victory and harp of joy. Those feet which have wearied themselves in going about to do good, shall stand in the courts of the Lord, and walk in the garden of God, and in the streets of the new Jerusalem. That flesh which has been chastised and mortified, shall be rewarded for what it has suffered; nay, the very hairs of our heads are all numbered; how much more, then, the parts of our bodies? "This," says *the Resurrection* himself, "is my Father's will "that has sent me, that of ALL which he has given me, "ΠΑΝ ὁ δεδωκε μοι, I should lose nothing, but raise "IT up at the last day[u]." We might, indeed, follow the objectors to the resurrection into the cold obscure of metaphysics. But what has been alleged from the Scriptures, and the power of God revealed in those Scriptures, (the only topics of argumentation upon subjects of this nature,) overturns the foundation of

[u] John, vi. 39.

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every thing the objectors have to offer; and it will, I presume, be much more profitable to lay open from the Scriptures the manner in which this change is to be wrought.

The greatness of the change appears from this, that "our vile body is to be fashioned like unto "Christ's glorious body." Of this he was pleased to give a specimen to Peter and James and John, and, in them, to all his disciples who, by faith and devotion, will accompany their Master, in "the body "of HIS humiliation," to the top of mount Tabor. There they may behold an ensample of this most amazing change; the power of the Highest, which dwelt in Christ, diffusing itself outwardly, till he appeared all over exceeding glorious; his face shining like the sun, and his raiment becoming white as the light[w]. Who is not ready to say, "It is good "for us to be here, to behold the fair beauty of the "Lord, even the glory of God in the face of Jesus "Christ?" But here we must not stay, because he did not. For though, at the brightness before him, the cloud passed, and the sun for a little while appeared in his strength, the cloud soon returned and overshadowed him, and he entered into it. He descended from the mount of transfiguration to the heart of the earth, and then "there was darkness "over all the land;" but he soon went up to an higher mountain than Tabor, was again transfigured, and

[w] See the resurrection of the body in an ingenious and beautiful manner illustrated from the transfiguration of Christ, by the Reverend Mr. HOLMES, in his excellent sermon on that subject.

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introduced a day which no cloud shall ever overcast more. He became, as it was foretold that he should do, "as the light of the morning when the sun arises, "even a morning without clouds[x]." The world, indeed, sees him not; but to us who believe, a door is "opened in heaven, and behold a throne set, like "the fiery flame, and its wheels as burning fire, and "one sits on it, to look upon like a jasper, and a "sardine stone; his garment white as snow, and the "hairs of his head like the pure wool; his eyes as a "flame of fire, and his feet like unto fine brass, as "if they burned in a furnace, and his countenance "as the sun shineth in his strength[y]." "Beloved," says St. John, "it does not yet appear what "we shall be;" but this we know, that "when "he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall "see him as he is," and, by seeing him, "be trans-"formed into the same image, from glory to glory." He has power, as the text informs us, to subdue all things to himself, because he is the Almighty God; and this power he will exert on our bodies. Yet a little while, and he will rend the heavens, and come down, and heaven and earth will be filled with the overflowing flood of the majesty of his glory, "as "the waters cover the sea;" the heavens over our heads melting away before it, and the mountains flowing down, in liquid fire, at its presence. At that instant, "when the shriek of millions, fearfully cry-"ing out, shall mingle with the trumpet of the arch-"angel, with the thunders of the departing heavens,

[x] 2 Sam. xxiii. 4. [y] Dan. vii. 9. x. 6.; Rev. i. 14.

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"and the noise of a world shaking into dissolution," at that instant, "the dead shall be raised, and we "shall be changed." Changed—not by the corruptible being taken away, and the incorruptible being introduced in its room, but by a superinduction of the incorruptible upon the corruptible. For thus says the apostle—"We that are in this tabernacle "do groan earnestly, desiring to be *clothed upon* with "our house which is from heaven. Not for that we "should be *unclothed*," or lose the earthly body, "but *clothed upon*," with a superinvestiture of *the house from heaven*, namely, the divine light, which is to enwrap and invest the mortal body as a garment. And not only invest it outwardly, as a garment, but, by the divine energy of its almighty power, penetrate and pierce through and through its most intimate substance, till it has converted, subdued, worked, and changed it all into itself, so that mortality is swallowed up of life, and corruption quite absorbed and lost in the ocean of the all-encircling glory. Then shall the righteous be seen standing, victorious, through faith in Jesus, transformed (to compare the things of this world with those of another) from the darkness of dust and ashes, to the clear transparency of glass, the pure lustre of diamonds, the inconceivable agility of light, and the perfect impassibility of heaven. No reasonable man can complain that the Scriptures are not explicit enough upon the subject. But the transformation of mortality into glory is one of those things of God, which the natural man never will know nor discern. Though, surely, if nature teach any religion, it is the Christian;

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if she preach any doctrine, it is this resurrection and change. And were not the book of nature, as well as that of grace, become a sealed book, what man that ever travelled with the earth through the vicissitudes of a year, could deny a resurrection? Ask the furrows of the field, and they shall tell thee. For "except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, and "die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth "much fruit." The parts of the seed cannot spring afresh till they have been first dissolved. It is true, the husbandman soweth only bare grain; but it arises "clothed upon" with a beautiful verdure. And "if God so clothe the grass of the field," how much more shall he clothe your mortal bodies with a glorious immortality, O ye of little faith? But why need we take the compass of a year? Every twenty-four hours there is a rehearsal, in nature, of man's death and resurrection. Every evening, the day, with its works, dies into darkness and the shadow of death. All colours fade, all beauty vanishes, all labour and motion cease, and every creature, veiled in darkness, mourns, in solemn silence, the interment of the world. Who would not say, "It is dead, it shall not rise!" Yet, wait only a few hours, in faith and patience, and this dead and entombed earth, by the agency of Heaven upon it, shall burst asunder the bars of that sepulchral darkness in which it was imprisoned, and "arise, and be enlightened, and its light shall come; "the day-spring from on high shall visit it, and de-"stroy the covering cast over all people," and array universal nature with a robe of glory and beauty, raising those that sleep, to behold themselves and the

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world changed from darkness to light, and calling them up to give glory to God and think of the resurrection. Happy are they, who make this use of it. God shall help them, when that morning appeareth, of which every morning has been to them a blessed prelude; to such, day unto day uttereth the word of the everlasting Gospel, and night unto night showeth the knowledge of salvation. They understand how "the heavens declare the glory of God" in the felicity of his chosen, and furnish us with some ideas of our approaching glorification. Nothing earthly can fully represent that which is changed from earthly to heavenly, for "the glory of the celestial is "one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of "the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one "star differeth from another star in glory. So also is "the resurrection of the dead." There is one glory of the Sun of Righteousness, another glory of the moon, his church, walking in the brightness she receives from him, and another glory of the stars, his saints; for here also one differeth from another star in glory. All stand in their order, in shining circles, round the throne of the Sun. There these morning stars sing together unto the Lord a new song, and all the sons of God, even the children of the resurrection, shout for joy; for they rest not day nor night, making one sound to be heard through all the heavenly courts—Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come! Heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord, Most High!

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Wherefore, my beloved brethren, seeing these our bodies are to become instruments of glory hereafter, how ought they to be instruments of grace here? for grace is the dawn of glory, as glory is the meridian of grace. Seeing we are to have such bodies, what ought our souls to be, for whom such bodies are prepared? And how ought we to spend our short moment of probation in "cleansing ourselves from all "filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in "the fear of God!" The consideration of our glorious change cannot but make our hearts to burn within us. And then is the time to reflect, that blessed is he, whose soul is changed from grace to grace, for his body shall be changed from glory to glory. And if the soul of a Christian be ever "transformed by the renewing of his mind," it must be, not while he is in the hurry and vanity of the world below, but when he leaves the world, and, following the steps of his dear Lord and Master, ascends, by faith to the mount of transfiguration, and is on his knees before God, remembering it is written—"While he PRAYED, he was TRANSFIGURED." Blessed therefore is he who breaks away from idle and vain conversation, to meditate in the law of God day and night; to commune with his own heart, and in his chamber; to call his past ways to remembrance, in the bitterness of his soul; to confess his wickedness and be sorry for his sin. "Rejoice, O young "man, in thy youth," says the world. "Blessed are "they that mourn," says he whom the world crucified. Let those, therefore, who enjoy a life of perfect leisure, and are continually complaining how

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heavy time hangs upon their hands, consider whether they could tell, if God should call upon them at this moment, when they ever freely and voluntarily withdrew for one hour, to attend the business of changing their souls from sin to righteousness, that so their bodies may be changed from dust to glory. And if this question, from the mouth of the all-seeing Judge, will strike the unprofitable servant speechless at his footstool, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Let us consider this, and be wise unto salvation, and in every thought, word, and action, remember our latter end. Let us remember, that "our Redeemer liveth, and that he shall indeed "stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though "after our skin, worms destroy this body, yet in this "flesh shall we see God." And may we so "look "for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ," by the eye of faith, that when we see him as he is, he may "change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like "unto his glorious body, according to the working, "whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto "himself."

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# DISCOURSE XVIII.

## THE UNSPEAKABLE GIFT.

EPHESIANS, IV. 7.

*Unto every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ.*

THE church, having in the course of her holy offices led us through all the different stages of the life of Christ, from his advent in the flesh to his death on the cross, and from thence to his glorious resurrection and triumphant ascension, has now at length brought us to the celebration of that joyful festival, wherein she proposes to our meditation the blessed fruit and crown of her Redeemer's labours, the effusion of the Spirit from on high. And with good reason it is, that she calls us together more than once to contemplate this greatest of God's mercies, from which alone we derive all our power and ability to contemplate the least of them. For though it was Christ who died, and rose, and ascended, it was the Spirit that proclaimed the news of his having done so to the world; though it was Christ who wrought our salvation, it was the Spirit that communicated the knowledge of it to the sons of men, and makes that knowledge effectual in their hearts. To his descent

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we owe the publication of the glad tidings, and the conversion of the nations that were once "afar off, "but are now made nigh by the blood of Jesus[a], "having access by one Spirit to the Father[b]." They that dwell in the uttermost parts of the earth have been struck with an holy fear and reverential awe at the signs and miracles of Jesus, and from thence have been heard songs, even Glory to the righteous Redeemer and Judge of the world; since even these isles of the Gentiles sing the praises of Jehovah, and glorify the Lord God of Israel in his church, as it is at this day.

"Every good and perfect gift," saith St. James, "is "from above, and cometh down from the Father of "lights, with whom is no variableness, neither sha-"dow of turning." The variableness and the shadow of turning are only in man. The Father of lights, like his glorious representative the sun, shines evermore with the same unvarying brightness and benignity, sending down his good and perfect gifts, as the sun does his light, on all. At the beginning, when God had finished his wonderful and glorious works, and pronounced them to be good, he made a deed of gift of the whole to his creature man, who might have continued, as he was placed, in the light of his heavenly Father's countenance. But by sin man turned away from God, as the earth does from the sun; and therefore, stripped of all the good and perfect gifts of glory and beauty, he sat desolate and disconsolate, in the shadow of death.

[a] Ephes. ii. 13. [b] Ephes. ii. 18.



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Sin having thus occasioned a general forfeiture, man has now more reason than ever to acknowledge every good thing he enjoys to be a free *gift* of God, coming down from above. And accordingly, we find, that a right notion of this matter is one of the marks which characterize a believer, and distinguish him from a man of the world. The one speaks of *possessing* as his own, what the other acknowledges to have *received* from God. "Soul," saith the carnal worldling in the Gospel, "thou hast goods laid up "for many years[c]." "What hast thou," saith St. Paul, "that thou didst not receive[d]?" The language of Esau is, "I have enough[e]." Jacob speaks in another style; "The good things which God hath "given me[f]." Pilate interrogates Christ, "Knowest "thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and I "have power to release thee[g]?" Christ replies to him, "Thou couldest have no power at all against "me, except it were given thee from above[h]." The same may be said with regard to the internal goods of the mind, as well as the external advantages of body or fortune. The Heathen, who knows not God or his gifts, calls his supposed virtue ἕξις, a *habit*, an acquisition of his own; the Christian speaks of his real holiness in no other style than that of δοσις, or δωρημα, a *gift* from God.

And this gift of holiness, or of the Spirit, whose title is the Holy One, was indeed the good and the perfect gift, the joy, the crown, and the glory of all

[c] Luke, xii. 19. [d] 1 Cor. iv. 7. [e] Gen. xxxiii. 9.
[f] Gen. xxxiii. 5. [g] John, xix. 10. [h] John, xix. 11.

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gifts; insomuch that Christ calls it emphatically, "The gift of God," saying to the woman of Samaria, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that "saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest "have asked of him, and he would have given thee "living water[i]." St. Peter uses the same form of expression, when he says to Simon Magus, "Thy "money perish with thee, because thou hast thought "that the gift of God might be purchased with mo-"ney[k]." As it came down from the Father of lights, it is more precious than fine gold, and all the things which are the objects of man's desire upon earth are not to be compared unto it. Wherefore St. Paul says of it, "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable "gift[l];" a gift, which no tongue of man could treat of as it deserved; so that a new set of tongues, endued with the force and activity of fire, were sent from heaven, to display and describe to the world the glories of this manifold grace of God.

But we are to consider the *Giver* of this unspeakable gift, which is Christ; "the gift of Christ," says the text. And it could be the gift of no other, because man having by rebellion forfeited the original grant, the attainder must be taken off before the grant could be renewed. Christ only could take off the attainder, and therefore Christ only could renew the grant. And as he did renew the grant, it is plain he has taken off the attainder. He died on the cross to atone for sin; he arose from the grave to show that the penalty was paid to the uttermost

[i] John, iv. 10. [k] Acts, viii. 20. [l] 2 Cor. ix. 15.



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farthing, because the surety was released and set free for ever; he ascended to plead the merits of what he had done for his brethren; and he sent down the Spirit upon the church, to demonstrate the acceptance of those merits, since he who pleaded them was in full possession of the forfeited riches of grace in the kingdom of heaven. "Wherefore he saith, "When he ascended up on high, and led captivity "captive, he gave gifts unto men[m]." When, having overcome the sharpness of death, and vanquished the powers of hell, he went up, a glorious conqueror, in triumph to his throne in heaven, then it was that he scattered abroad the tokens of his victory, and poured forth the pledges of his munificence on the church, for which he died to purchase them. That same Jesus who was crucified, "being exalted to "the right hand of God," hath shed forth those streams of the water of life, which have been flowing ever since from the throne of God and the Lamb, through the appointed channels, to water every plant and flower in the garden of God.

I say *every* plant and flower; because "unto every "one of us," as the apostle declares, "is given "grace." No member of Christ is without the grace of Christ, which is conveyed, with his blood, by the sacraments and other ordinances, to quicken and animate the whole body of the church, as the vital heat is diffused, with the natural blood, through the arteries, to support and invigorate all the parts of the body of a man. The spirit and blood of Christ

[m] Ephes. iv. 8.

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are as necessary for the life of the church and her members, as the vital heat and natural blood are for the life of the body and its members. When, therefore, all flesh, Gentile as well as Jew, became incorporated into the church, which is the body of Christ, the Lord poured out of his Spirit upon all flesh, and there was no age, sex, condition, or nation, that did not partake of the fountain of life freely, which flowed from the heart of Christ pierced on the cross, and which, when circulated in the church, as the blood is in the body, wherever it came brought life, and health, and salvation with it to all flesh. In no place was its "way manifested upon earth," by the preaching of the word, and the institution of the ordinances, which were as so many vessels to convey it, but there was manifested, at the same time, "its "saving health unto all nations," all being "one body "in Christ Jesus, and every one members one of "another."

But though grace be given to the whole body, and every member has his share, we must not forget, that every member is to have no more than his share. For as "all members have not the same office," but "there are diversities of administrations," so likewise must there be "diversities of gifts." For the Spirit was given in different *measure* to different persons, and at different times: as to the apostles, for establishing the church, in one measure; to the ordinary ministers, for governing it, in another; and to every individual, for his sanctification, in a third. "Unto every one of us is given grace, according to "the measure of the gift of Christ."

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The first measure, which may be styled the *apostolical*, differs from all the rest in the nature of the gifts, as well as their end, and the manner of their being given.

As to their nature, it is written, that "God bore "the apostles witness with signs, and wonders, and "divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost[n]," who was constantly with them, displaying to the world his almighty power by numberless external demonstrations of his presence, as well as manifesting his infinite wisdom by his internal operation and gifts. They had "the word of wisdom," or a supernatural revelation made to them of that wisdom of God in a mystery, the whole scheme of his dispensations in Christ. They had "the word of knowledge," or the gift of understanding the Scriptures, which contain and describe this wisdom. They had "faith," to remove all mountains that stood in their way by miracles, and to give them an holy confidence and courage, invincible by all the powers of earth and hell. They had the gift of "healing" all the diseases of soul and body by a single word; the power of working all "miracles," controlling the agency of created nature, raising the dead, and inflicting punishments on the disobedient, as Moses did on Egypt, by the rod of their apostolic power. They had the gift of "pro-"phecy," to explain things past, and foretel things future, to preach and pray at all times by the Spirit, till all things were put in order, and the church-services

[n] Heb. ii. 4.

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framed and established. They could "discern spi-
"rits," and see through all the devices and disguises of Satan at a glance. Add to all this the gift of "tongues, and their interpretation," by which the same persons were enabled to speak and understand all the languages under heaven, without a moment's labour.

The end for which these extraordinary gifts were bestowed, was the public benefit of the church, then rising out of the nations, and opposed, on one side, by the envy and malignity of the blind Jew, on the other, by the false wisdom and earthly power of the idolatrous Gentile. In these circumstances, "the "word of knowledge" was necessary to confute the Jew from the Scriptures; "the word of wisdom, "and the demonstration of the Spirit," to bring to nothing the wisdom and overthrow the power of the Gentile; and all the gifts of God to cast out and destroy the works of the devil. As the church was to be gathered out of an unbelieving world, there was need of miracles, which, as the apostle says, "are "a sign to them that believe not." And this may perhaps intimate to us the time when they ceased, namely, when the spirit of Heathenism and opposition was overcome and extinguished by them. These gifts therefore were given "for the work of the mi-
"nistry, and edification of the body of Christ;" not for the private or inward sanctification of those that had them, who were not the better men for them, but were to be sanctified in their degree by the ordinary means, as other men were. To prevent men

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from being puffed up with what is bestowed on them for the benefit of others, it should be recollected; that Saul was among the prophets, and Judas among the apostles. Wherefore Christ tells us, that "many "will say to him in the day of judgement, Lord "Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name; and "in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done "many wonderful works? And then will I profess "unto them, I never knew you, depart from me, "ye that work iniquity[o]." And so again, when the apostles, having received and made trial of their gifts, returned to him full of joy, "saying, Lord, "the very devils are subject to us through thy name;" his answer was, "In this rejoice not, that the spirits "are subject unto you, but rather rejoice because "your names are written in heaven[p]." And the reason is plain; for so far were these miraculous powers from necessarily transforming their minds and renewing their souls, that they could not, like one single act of genuine repentance and saving faith, give them a title to the kingdom of God. St. Paul, the great converter of the Gentile world, was obliged to use the proper means of mortification and self-denial, to "keep under his body and bring it "into subjection, lest, after he had preached to "others," in all the demonstration of the power of the omnipotent Spirit, he, this great St. Paul himself, should become a castaway.

The manner in which these apostolical gifts were conferred, shows them to have been extraordinary;

[o] Matt. vii. 22. [p] Luke, x. 17, 20.

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and for extraordinary purposes. For whereas the Spirit in its ordinary work of sanctification acts upon the souls of men, as his representative, the air, or material spirit, does upon their bodies, by a silent, equable, and imperceptible mode of operation, giving to all things life and motion; his coming at the day of Pentecost was sudden, impetuous, and irresistible; not in the still small voice of the common breathing of the air, but in "the sound of a mighty "rushing wind;" and that not blowing, as in the common course of nature, horizontally, but descending directly from above; not spreading itself abroad, and diffusing its agency universally, but "filling that "house," and that house only, "where the apostles "were sitting." From thence, indeed, it went forth, by a display of its miraculous gifts, to the ends of the world. For as it had a work to perform, which never was performed but once, so its operations were such as no spirit in after-times can pretend to, without proving itself, by the attempt, to be a spirit of error and delusion; since there is as much difference between the extraordinary effusion of the Spirit at the day of Pentecost for the purpose of founding the church, and the ordinary gift of grace for the sanctification of believers, as there is between that mighty Spirit, which, at God's command, moved at the beginning upon the face of the deep to form the earth, and the common air acting continually for its support and preservation.

The second measure of grace is the *ecclesiastical* measure, or that which is given to the ordinary ministry, for the standing government and continual

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edification of the church. This likewise is the gift of Christ, he being the fountain-head of all principality and power; and it is conferred by the Spirit, who only commissions men to be the representatives of Christ, and to act in his name. Thus it is written in the Acts of the Apostles; "The Holy Ghost said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul[q]." This ecclesiastical measure is as distinct from the common measure of sanctification as the apostolical, which will be seen by considering (as in the former case) its nature, the end for which, and manner in which, it is given.

As to its nature, it is a *commission*, or an *office*, concerning which it is a rule established beyond all controversy, that "no man taketh it unto himself." Internal gifts and graces may qualify a person for an office, but they cannot put him into one. No man, however righteous and holy through faith and the sanctifying grace of the holy Spirit, can have authority to act in the name of Christ, till Christ gives him that authority. Before that is done, let his life and character be what they will, his ministrations can have no validity. Whatever he may be in other respects, in this particular he is a grievous offender, and will be found guilty before God of sacrilegiously intruding into an office to which he can have no pretensions: a crime, for which the leprosy once rose up in the forehead of a monarch[r], and Korah

[q] Acts, xiii. 2.

[r] "When Uzziah was strong, his heart was lifted up to his "destruction; for he transgressed against the Lord his God, and

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and all his company (holy as they said they all were) went down alive into the pit. And that none in the Christian church might imitate the presumption of Uzziah, or, "go in the gain-saying of Korah," even Christ "took not this honour upon himself, nor "glorified himself to be made an high priest," for a glory it was to him, "till he was called of God," by the visible descent of the Holy Ghost upon him in the presence of the people, and by the voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom "I am well pleased. From that time Jesus began "to preach."—Who then is that follower of Jesus, that shall offer to begin before?

The end for which this ecclesiastical measure of the gift of Christ was bestowed on the church, con-

"went into the temple of the Lord, to burn incense upon the "altar of incense. And Azariah the priest went in after him, "and with him fourscore priests of the Lord, that were valiant "men. And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, "It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto "the Lord, but unto the priests, the sons of Aaron, that are "consecrated to burn incense; go out of the sanctuary, for thou "hast trespassed, neither shall it be for thine honour from the "Lord God. Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his "hand to burn incense; and while he was wroth with the priests, "the leprosy even rose up in his forehead, before the priests, in "the house of the Lord, from beside the incense altar. And "Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked upon him, "and behold he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him "out from thence; yea, himself hasted also to go out, because "the Lord had smitten him. And Uzziah the king was a leper "until the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, being "a leper, for he was cut off from the house of the Lord." 2 Chron. xxvi. 16, et seq.

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firms the distinction between that and the common measure of sanctifying grace. The end of the apostolical gifts was the establishment of the church; the end of the ecclesiastical is the preservation of it, by the exercise of discipline, the preaching of the word, and the administration of the sacraments. Persons are separated from a common condition to holy offices, that by their ministration souls may be separated from the pollutions of sin to holiness of life. So that holiness of office is as distinct from holiness of life, as the cause from the effect; one is given to the ministry, that the other may be produced in the people. And though all that are in holy offices ought to lead holy lives, and it should be a part of our daily prayers to God that he would enable them to do so, yet a failure in duty is not a forfeiture of authority. The vices of a minister make not void the acts of his ministry; dominion, in this case, as in all others, not being founded on grace, but on a positive commission given by him who is empowered to give it, and continuing in force till he takes it away. It is with an officer of the church as with an officer of the state: a misdemeanor does not vacate his office, or entitle another to step into it. The king, or an agent appointed by him, must take it from one, and give it to another. If this necessary distinction between holiness of *office* and holiness of *person* be not kept up, the end for which a ministry was appointed will not be attained; all will be teachers, and no hearers; all governors, and no subjects; the church, as a society, will be dissolved, and a confusion introduced into the spiritual system, like that which prevailed in

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the natural, when "the earth was without form "and void, and darkness lay upon the face of the "deep."

The manner of the conveyance of this ecclesiastical measure of grace has likewise been always distinctive of it. Under the law the priesthood was conveyed by *unction*. And to show how far removed it was from every thing common or ordinary, it is written concerning the holy anointing oil upon the occasion, "Upon man's flesh shall it not be poured, "neither shall ye make any other like it, after the "composition of it; it is holy, and it shall be holy "unto you. Whosoever compoundeth any like it, "or whosoever putteth any of it upon a stranger, "shall even be cut off from his people[s]." When Christ, after his resurrection, appointed his apostles to the work of the ministry, "he *breathed* on them, "and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost[t]." The next words show for what purpose the Spirit was then given by his breathing on them; "Whose soever sins ye "remit, they are remitted; and whose soever sins "ye retain, they are retained." The apostles afterwards ordained "by the laying on of hands," as their successors have done, and do to this day, saying, after the example and by the authority of their great Lord and Master; "Receive thou the Holy Ghost. "Whose soever sins thou dost remit, they are re-"mitted; and whose soever sins thou dost retain, "they are retained[u]."

[s] Exod. xxx. 32. [t] John, xx. 22.
[u] Church of England Ordination Office.

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The third measure of the gift of Christ is that given for the personal *sanctification* of individuals. Now in order to form a clear idea of sanctification, it must be considered, that man, as a fallen creature, stands in need of two things, a deliverance from the guilt of sins past, and an emancipation from the power of sin present and future. The former of these is styled *justification*, the latter *sanctification*. The one is performed without a man, by the blood of Christ effectually offered and pleaded for him in the presence of God, upon his repentance and faith; the other is wrought within him, by the Spirit sent into his soul, in consequence, as well as evidence, of its justification. Christ first made the atonement for sin by shedding his blood, then ascended to plead it, and then sent the Spirit. The atonement he made once; but he liveth continually to make intercession for us, by pleading it on our behalf; and as continually to send the Spirit to renew the soul of every sinner, who, by repentance and faith, through the ministration of the church, lays hold on the benefits of that prevailing intercession, and is "accepted in "the beloved." Justification, whensoever granted, must be perfect, because forgiveness cannot be partial; sanctification may be imperfect, and always is so till death, because till then "in many things we "offend all," and still stand in need of fresh justification and forgiveness: else why pray we for it to our last breath, in the words which Christ himself hath taught us, "Forgive us our trespasses?" And why said the holy and experienced Augustine, that "the "best posture in which death can find the most per-

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"fect Christian, is upon his knees, confessing his "sins, and entreating forgiveness?"

The first portion of sanctifying grace is given at baptism, which, is the seal of justification, and the beginning of sanctification; inasmuch as the sinner being then sacramentally buried with Christ into his death, arises with him in the power of his resurrection, justified from the guilt of sin through repentance and faith in his blood, and renewed unto holiness by the operation of his Spirit. This total renewal, at first conferred by the baptismal laver, is styled *regeneration*, and answers, in things natural, to the birth of an infant. But then, as an infant, though born complete in all its parts, yet comes to its full stature and strength by slow and imperceptible degrees; by being supplied with proper kinds of food for its nourishment when in health, and proper medicines for its recovery when otherwise: so is it with the regenerate spirit of a Christian; while it is (as St. Peter calls it) a babe in Christ, it must be fed with the milk of the word; when it is more grown in grace, with the strong meat of its salutary doctrines; when it is infirm, it must be strengthened by the comforts of its promises; and when sick, or wounded by sin, it must be recovered and restored by godly counsel and wholesome discipline, by penance and absolution, by the medicines of the word and sacraments as duly and properly administered in the church, by the lawfully and regularly appointed delegates and representatives of the Physician of souls. This gradual and complex work of our sanctification, is carried on, through our whole lives, by the Spirit of God

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given, in due degree and proportion, to every individual for that purpose. And it is marvellous to behold, as the excellent bishop Andrews observes, how, from the laver of regeneration, to the administration of the *Viaticum*, this good Spirit helpeth us, and poureth his benefits upon us, having a grace for every season. When we are troubled with erroneous opinions, he is the Spirit of truth; when assaulted with temptations, he is the Spirit of holiness; when dissipated with worldly vanity, he is the Spirit of compunction; when broken with worldly sorrow, he is the Holy Ghost the Comforter. It is he who, after having regenerated us in our baptism, confirms us by the imposition of hands; renews us to repentance, when we fall away; teaches us, all our life long, what we know not; puts us in mind of what we forget; stirs us up when we are dull; helps us in our prayers; relieves us in our infirmities; consoles us in our heaviness; gives songs of joy in the darkest night of sorrow; seals us to the day of our redemption; and raises us up again in the last day; when that which was sown in grace shall be reaped in glory, and the work of sanctification in spirit, soul, and body, shall be completed.—What Christian, that considers this unspeakable gift of God, but must say of him with the Psalmist, "He hath put a new song "in my mouth, even a thanksgiving unto our God[w]?" seeing every one of us may now so properly take up those other words of the same sweet Psalmist; "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the

[w] Psal. xl. 3.

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"days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of "the Lord for ever[x]."

What therefore remains, but that we show forth the thankfulness of our hearts by the holiness of our lives, and live as becometh those whom Christ, having redeemed by his most precious blood, hath sanctified with his most holy Spirit. Seeing Christ our Saviour has bestowed such a gift upon his church, let us never provoke him to take it from us. As it is a gift, let us always be forward to acknowledge as much; not attributing to nature what is due to grace, or robbing the Holy Ghost to adorn reason. As, though a gift, it is given to every man to profit withal, let us have that day continually in our thoughts, when an account of our profiting will be required; and let us never forget, that the same fire burns for the *unprofitable* and *unbeliever;* for him who neglects this gracious gift and for him who rejects it. Since by the ascension of Christ the heavens have been opened, and the Holy Dove has been sent down upon the earth, let us not give sleep to our eyes, nor slumber to our eye-lids, till we have prepared in our hearts an habitation for him. Let pride depart, that it drive not away the Spirit of humility; let anger be put from us, that we quench not the Spirit of meekness and let not that which is unchaste be named or thought of, that we grieve not the Spirit of purity. So shall we be meet entertainers of this heavenly guest, and "to every one of us will be given the gift of "Christ."

[x] Psal. xxiii. ult.



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But as there are different measures of this gift, let every one take care that he think not more highly of himself, or arrogate more to himself, than he ought; but let him know himself, his station, and his abilities, and think and act soberly, according as God has dealt the measure to him. The God who sent the Spirit is a God of order, and from the beginning "has appointed divers orders in the church," and set different officers in different posts. Let every man therefore, in his own order, do the work allotted him. Let not the layman take upon him the office of a deacon; nor the deacon intrude into the function of the priest; nor the priest usurp the authority of the bishop; much less fancy himself invested with the œcumenical commission of an apostle. Good men have had occasion to lament the calamities that have been brought upon the church, from age to age, through a neglect of this important consideration; a consideration, on which is suspended the felicity of every society in heaven and earth. When the soul of the learned, the pious, the incomparable author of the *Ecclesiastical Polity* was about to take her flight to the regions of everlasting harmony and love, a friend asked him, what might then be the subject of his contemplations! He replied, that, "he was "meditating the number and nature of angels, and "their blessed obedience and order, without which "peace could not be in heaven—and, O that it might "be so on earth!" With our endeavours let us add our prayers to his, that our eyes might behold Jerusalem "a city at unity in itself;" a city, on this ac-

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count, equally conspicuous for beauty and strength; to its friends appearing "fair as the moon;" to its spiritual adversaries "terrible as an army with banners."



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# DISCOURSE XIX.

## THE PREVAILING INTERCESSOR.

NUMBERS, XVI. 47, 48.

*And Aaron took, as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation; and, behold, the plague was begun among the people; and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people. And he stood between the dead and the living, and the plague was stayed.*

IT may be questioned, whether any history in the world ever afforded a finer subject for a picture, than this before us. Aaron, in his sacerdotal vestments, the smoke of the incense ascending from the holy censer in his hand, might be drawn, standing up amidst crowds of Israelites, smitten with the pestilence. The wrath of God might be represented, rolling forth in fiery waves from the tabernacle, and almost reaching the high priest; but recoiling, as checked in its progress by his powerful intercession. On one side of the intercessor might be portrayed the most ghastly horrors in the countenances of the dead; on the other side might be discovered the re-

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viving gleams of hope and joy in the faces of the living, on perceiving that the plague was stayed.

But, in order to enter thoroughly into all the parts of this supposed picture, it will be necessary to take a view of the whole history to which it relates; that we may learn the crime of the sufferers which brought on their punishment, and the nature of that intercession which put a stop to it.

Moses and Aaron were appointed by God the governors and conductors of his people. But, though they ruled with the utmost wisdom and integrity, it happened, that *they* could not please every body. Korah, a discontented, factious Levite, charged Aaron with priestcraft: "All the congregation, he said, "were holy, and the Lord was among them;" every man was qualified to be his own priest, to instruct, and to save himself; and who was Aaron, that he should set himself up above his brethren, and lord it over God's heritage? At the same time that a schism was thus forming in the church, a rebellion was likewise fomented in the state. For Dathan and Abiram, who were laymen, and princes of the congregation, accused Moses of tyranny, and a design to establish arbitrary power; which they affirmed to be so clear a case, that unless he "put out the eyes" of the people, they must see he intended to enslave, and to make "himself altogether a prince over them." Matters soon came to an open rupture; God himself was appealed to, and a day fixed to determine the cause. And a most tremendous determination indeed it was. For when the two parties, according to order, had separated from each other, and all with

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eager expectation stood waiting the event, behold "the ground," which was under the rebels, suddenly "clave asunder, and the earth opened her mouth, "and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all "that appertained to them; they went down alive "into the pit, and the earth closed upon them, "and they perished from among the congregation. "And there came out a fire from the Lord, and "consumed the two hundred and fifty men that of-"fered incense." They who have not studied human nature, who have not seen nor heard much of mankind, will perhaps imagine that such a decision as this must needs have silenced every objection, and put an end to the murmurings of discontent. And so far indeed it is true, that "the people fled at the cry of "those who suffered, for they said, Lest the earth "swallow us up also." But as soon as the danger was over, they discovered the real sentiments of their corrupted hearts. After a single night's rest, the spirit of rebellion again took possession of them; and, all reverence laid aside, they go in a tumultuous and insolent manner to their leaders, requiring at their hands, truly, the blood of Korah and his followers. "On the morrow, all the congregation of the children "of Israel murmured against Moses and against "Aaron, saying, Ye have slain the people of the "Lord." Thus, by standing up for these offenders, they showed a secret approbation of their offence; and, being partakers of their crime, they justly became partakers also of their punishment. The divine wrath, therefore, went out against them. "Get you "up," said the Lord to Moses and Aaron "from among

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"this congregation, that I may consume them as in a "moment." A most dreadful pestilence ensued; and then it was, that Aaron did, as is recorded of him in the text; "he took a censer, with fire from off "the altar, and put on incense, as Moses com-"manded, and ran into the midst of the congregation, "and made an atonement for the people." He exposed himself, for their sake, to the vengeance of Heaven, which was rolling on like an irresistible torrent, and had already swept away near fifteen thousand of his brethren; he stood in the midway between the wrath and them, "between the dead and "the living; and the plague was stayed." It stopped where Aaron stood; before him all were consumed; all behind him were saved:—an action this so full of faith and love, as to deserve the admiration of all ages; so wonderfully blessed in its consequences, that it cannot but well repay the time and pains we shall employ in inquiring into the grounds and reasons of them, and learning how it should come to pass, that the intercession of Aaron should arrest the wrath of God in its impetuous course, and save from impending death the remnant of rebellious Israel. And in the prosecution of the subject it may perhaps appear, that this awful and affecting scene which we have been contemplating, as affording fine matter for a picture, is itself a picture only of another more august and interesting scene, in which all the children of Adam are concerned, and do bear their parts.

Let us then ask—Was it for Aaron's sake, that God spared the remnant of his people? Had Aaron

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any merit of his own, any superfluous righteousness, which might be imputed to them? Far from it; since, however comparatively holy and faithful he might be, yet was he a descendant of that Adam, of whose children it is testified, that "there is none that doeth "good; no not one." He and "every high priest "taken from among men," were necessarily heirs of the universal corruption; they had their infirmities, as the apostle argues, and were obliged to offer up sacrifices for their *own* sins, as well as for those of the people. Aaron, therefore, of himself, could make no atonement for them; and without an atonement, the justice of God could not let them escape. To account for this wonderful deliverance, we must carry on our thoughts farther; we must look to some higher atonement, some greater and more powerful Intercessor and High Priest, in whose name Aaron might act, and in virtue of whose merits he might, as a representative, prevail with God to be gracious to his people.

And here, there is but one person upon whom all our thoughts must immediately be fixed, namely, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the great High Priest of our profession, the effectual Intercessor for the salvation of sinners. Had we any doubt, whether Aaron, when officiating according to the law, represented *Him*, St. Paul, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, has determined the point beyond all contradiction. He tells us, that the law had a shadow of good things to come, of which Christ and his heavenly truths were the body and substance; that Aaron and all other high priests were the representatives of him who is

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our gracious Intercessor and High Priest for ever; that the holy of holies in the temple was the figure of heaven itself; that all which Aaron did there, foreshowed what our Lord did and does for us above; that the blood there offered by Aaron and his successors, under the law, pointed out the blood of Christ, by him offered to the Father in heaven; and the incense, which was fumed upon those occasions, to diffuse a grateful smell, denoted the merits of our blessed Redeemer, which appease the wrath of God, render all our prayers and oblations acceptable, and fill heaven and earth with the sweet smelling savour of life, peace, and salvation.

These things being understood and considered, we may easily collect, from what has been said, the reason why Aaron's intercession on the behalf of offending Israel was so powerful and effectual. For if Aaron, in the office of high priest and mediator, represented the world's Redeemer, and if the atonement, which he made for Israel, showed forth that great atonement to be one day made by Jesus Christ for the church universal of all ages and nations; then God had undoubtedly respect unto that great atonement, and, for his sake who was to make it, pardoned those for whom it was to be made. In the person of Aaron he beheld his beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased, interceding for the transgressors; Israel was spared for the sake of Aaron, but Aaron himself was accepted for the sake of Christ.

And now, I would willingly hope that this scene begins to open upon you in all its glory. For surely the brightest imagination cannot figure to itself a more

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exact and lively representation of our sinfulness, of the divine wrath, and the mercies of redemption. Under this most affecting image of rebellious Israel, smitten with a pestilence, and saved by the intercession of Aaron, are described to us the miserable and lost state of man after the fall, the terrible execution of God's justice on the one hand, and the gracious interposition of our Redeemer on the other, with the effects of both.

Were the men of Israel sinners and rebels against their God? So we are all. All have sinned; all have broken their allegiance to their Creator and Sovereign, and gone over to his and their enemy. When we read of the repeated transgressions of Israel, with the mercies and the judgements of Heaven fresh in their memories, nay, even before their eyes, we are amazed and confounded, and almost tempted to disbelieve the accounts of such horrible perverseness and ingratitude. But conscience sleepeth all this while, and we stand in need of a Nathan, to tell each of us, "Thou art the man." For who amongst us has not experienced the mercies of God; and who has not abused them? Who has not trembled at his judgements; and who has not forgotten them again? Who, in the hour of sickness and sorrow, has not made vows and resolutions of amendment; and who, in the day of health and gladness, has not broken those vows and resolutions? Alas, my brethren! our own hearts, if we do but consult them, must tell us, that the history of Israel is true, and that we all have in us, derived from our common father Adam, a portion of the same rebellious spirit which was in them.

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"Are we better than they? No, in no wise; for," as saith an apostle, "we have charged both Jews and "Gentiles," that is, all the world, "that they are all "under sin; as it is written" in the Scriptures of truth, "There is none righteous, no not one; there "is none that understandeth, there is none that seek-"eth after God. They are all gone out of the way, "they are altogether become unprofitable, there is "none that doeth good, no not one. Their throat "is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have "used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; "whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness, their "feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and mi-"sery are in their ways, and the way of peace have "they not known; there is no fear of God before "their eyes—All have sinned, and come short of the "glory of God." Such is the Scripture account of fallen man; such are the works of which the world hath been full from the beginning, and is likely to continue so unto the end. Mankind, therefore, resemble the people of Israel in their sins. Let us next examine, whether they do not likewise resemble them in their punishment.

Did Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, with all their company, go down into the pit? Did a fire come forth from the Lord, and consume the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense? And did a raging pestilence sweep off the murmurers by thousands? What are we taught by all this, but the same concerning lesson which the apostle teaches us in words, that "the wages of sin is death," and that "death passed upon all men, for that all have sin-

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"ned." Forfeiture of life and inheritance necessarily followed the transgression. In Adam all died; all become mortal in their bodies, and subjected to the sentence of natural death. And not only so, but the souls of men were deprived by sin of communication with God, who is the fountain of spiritual life; and both soul and body were in danger of eternal death. When, therefore, we behold the camp of Israel in the wilderness, visited by the divine judgements; when we see some going down alive into the dreadful pit; others burnt up in a moment by fire from heaven; and a pestilence threatening to consume the rest; when we look around, and view, in every part of the picture, the dying and the dead; do we not at once acknowledge the original from which it is drawn, and discern in it the too, too faithful portrait of a fallen world, full of misery and death, because full of sin and rebellion!

But what? Must we then indeed perish? Must we all perish? "Will the Lord cast off for ever; and "will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean "gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for evermore? "Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in "anger shut up his tender mercies?" Is the plague begun among the people, and is there no person who can stay it? O not so; blessed be our gracious God! there is yet hope of comfort, health, and salvation. Turn your eyes once more to the instructive picture, and there view the Intercessor making atonement, and saving the remnant of his people. Destruction was not the end for which God formed man. "For "God made not death. He created man to be im-

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" mortal, and made him an image of his own eternity. " Through envy of the devil came death into the " world, and still, as at the first, they alone who " hold of his side do find it." The covenant of works being broken by transgression, the covenant of grace immediately succeeded in its room. This was the remedy provided against sin and death, and the blessed means of reconciliation fore-ordained by the Divine Persons, before the foundation of the world; that the sinner, who had no righteousness of his own to plead in arrest of judgement upon the new terms of this act of grace, might again find acceptance and life, through the divine satisfaction and intercession of our Lord Jesus Christ. *He* was consecrated to be our High Priest, and ordained to perform an office, in attempting which, every high priest taken from among men must else have failed. He had no need to offer sacrifice for his own sins, since he had none; but being himself all righteous, was perfectly qualified to save others. Nor was his priesthood to pass from one to another, or to have an end, like that of Aaron; but it was eternal and unchangeable, as the Son of God who exercised it. Such was our High Priest, who perceived that, on account of man's transgression, wrath was gone forth from the presence of the Lord, and that the plague was begun among the people. And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor. Therefore he arrayed himself in the holy garments of glory and beauty; he put on a breast-plate of righteousness, and a robe of inviolable sanctity, and he was clad,

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over all, with zeal as a cloke. He was anointed with the oil of gladness, with the Holy Ghost, and with power; and on his head was a crown of salvation and glory. Thus adorned and fitted for the work, he put on, for incense, the merits of his sufferings. He ran into the midst of God's people, as a mediator, interposing himself between the parties at variance, in order to reconcile them. He met the burning wrath, and turned it aside from all believers. He stood, and stands now, between the dead and the living, between those who, by opposing his method of salvation, will die in their sins, and those who, living and believing in him, shall never die eternally. He is at the right hand of God, ever making intercession for us. And so the plague is stayed. A stop is put to the progress of everlasting destruction. The fiery sword of offended justice cannot reach, nor shall the second death have any power over such as accept the atonement which he hath made for them, and thankfully receive the benefits of his all-prevailing intercession. "There is now no condemnation to them that "are in Christ Jesus."

And can any thing, then, my brethren, prevent our accepting this atonement, and thankfully receiving the benefits of this intercession? Can any thing induce us, when the bountiful hand of mercy hath filled and holdeth out the cup of salvation, to dash it untasted from us? Nothing can, but an utter ignorance of our sin and of our danger. Could a dying Israelite have been prevailed upon, think you, to reject the atonement and intercession of Aaron? No, surely. Only

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see how hope revives in their countenances, and joy sparkles in their eyes, all turned and fixed upon him in the execution of his priestly office. And why? Because they were sensible of their wretched and perilous estate. They needed not to be told, that they were expiring by the pestilence. They knew it, they felt it; they were looking wishfully around them for help and deliverance, ready with eagerness and impatience, with gratitude and thankfulness, to snatch at it, and embrace it, the moment it should appear. O why are not we so? Why do we hear of the atonement and intercession of the holy Jesus with so much cold indifference? Why, but because we see not, we know not, we feel not, the want of them. And yet, what is there, within us, or without us, that doth not teach and show it us? To tell you that the world is full of sorrow is no news; to tell you that the world is full of sin, is, I presume, no news. And from what would you desire to be delivered, if not from sin and sorrow? To tell you that a sentence of death is passed upon the bodies of men, and that, without redemption, a sentence of condemnation will be passed upon their souls and bodies too, this likewise is no news to any one of you. Daily experience proves the first, and the Scripture asserts the second. And from what would you wish to be saved, if not from death and condemnation? Or what, in point of wretchedness and horror, was the camp of Israel with the pestilence in the midst of it, if compared to such a world as this? Go, thou who art tempted to reject, or to neglect, the satisfaction of Christ, go to the bed

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of sickness, and undraw the curtains of affliction; ask him who lies racked with pain, and trembling at the thoughts of the wrath to come, what his opinion is concerning the doctrine of atonement; and observe how the name of a Saviour and Intercessor puts comfort and gladness into his sorrowful and affrighted soul, at a time when the treasures and the crowns of Eastern kings would be utterly contemned, as equally vain, worthless, and unprofitable, with the dust of the earth. Then reflect, that such, one day, must be thy state; and in that state, such infallibly will be thy thoughts and sensations. And did the cares and pleasures of the world suffer living men to think and feel as dying men do, the intercession of Christ would be regarded and accepted by Christians, as that of Aaron once was by Israel. Now, indeed, the sentiments of men on this great point may be different, because their passions and their prejudices are different: but we shall all think alike upon the subject, when passion shall cease, and prejudice be no more, at the hour of death, and in the day of judgement. In that last and concerning day, the scene on which we have been meditating shall be again exhibited, in its most awful and tremendous accomplishment. Instead of the earthly pit opening its mouth to swallow up Korah and his company, the infernal pit of everlasting destruction shall disclose its bottomless depth, to receive alive into it the great adversary, and all that have taken part with him against God and Christ. Instead of fire from the presence of the Lord, to consume the two hundred and fifty that

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offered incense, "Behold the day cometh, that shall "burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea and all "that do wickedly, shall be as stubble: and the day "that cometh shall burn them up, and leave them "neither root nor branch." Instead of the pestilence to destroy fourteen thousand only of his murmuring people, the inexhaustible floods of almighty vengeance, heaped up for ages, shall be poured out, to drown rebellious spirits in irresistible perdition. Then, when the heavens shall melt with fervent heat all around, the fiery gulf rolling beneath, and the earth, upon which we stand, sinking down into the flames, then what a sight will it be, to behold our blessed Aaron, our great Mediator, standing up, and interposing his merits between the dead and the living; between those who, disbelieving, have murmured against him, and those who, believing, have served and obeyed him. Then tremble, thou wretch, who hast blasphemed, or slighted the intercession of Jesus. But rejoice greatly, O faithful soul, whose trust hath ever been in Him; thy salvation is sure, and the day of thy redemption is come: rejoice, and shout aloud for joy; join the chorus of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, the ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, whom the well-beloved John heard saying, "Worthy is the "Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, "and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, "and blessing." And with them let "every crea-"ture which is in heaven, and on the earth, and un-"der the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all "that are in them," exalt their voices, and proclaim,



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"Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, to him "that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, "for ever and ever." Amen[a].

[a] The plan and substance of the foregoing Discourse are taken from one published some years ago, by my late learned and valuable friend, the reverend Mr. Watson. But it always seemed to me, as I frequently used to tell him, that he had much abated the force and energy which the composition would otherwise have possessed, by introducing a secondary and subordinate subject, which continually diverted the attention of his reader from the primary and principal one. I was therefore tempted to work up his admirable materials afresh, with some few alterations and additions, that so noble a subject as the Intercession of Christ, illustrated by that of Aaron, might stand out to observation, *simplex duntaxat et unum.*

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# DISCOURSE XX.

## DANIEL IN BABYLON.

DANIEL, VI. 10.

*Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and, his windows being open in his chamber towards Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.*

THE chapter relates to us a conspiracy formed by the Babylonian princes against Daniel, because the king, "finding an excellent spirit in him," had preferred him above them all. For we read of no crime but his merit, which, indeed, is a crime sufficiently heinous in the eyes of those who are destitute of it. At all events, therefore, Daniel must be impeached. The only question was, in what form it should be done. "Concerning the kingdom," and his fidelity to his sovereign, "they could find (and "we may be sure it was not for want of diligence in "searching) none occasion or fault; forasmuch as "he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault "found in him." And now, what do they fix upon, as an article of impeachment against him? Why, truly, his PIETY. "We shall not find," say these



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statesmen, "any occasion against this Daniel, unless "we find it against him concerning the law of his "God." But some difficulty there still remained in the execution of this project; as, it seems, there was no law yet in being, even in Babylon itself, that inflicted a penalty upon a man for being eminently devout. The great men therefore assembling together, went in a body to the king, and prevailed upon him to sign a decree which flattered his pride, that "whosoever should ask a petition of any God, or man, "for thirty days, save of him, should be cast into the "den of lions." Thus was atheism established by the law, in the court, city, and empire of Babylon, for the space of one month; and now, let any one *pray* who dared. But the contrivers of this new law were well enough acquainted with Daniel's character, to know that fear of the lions would never cause him to give over his devotions for one day, much less for thirty. And so accordingly it turned out. For "when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he "went into his house; and, his windows being open "in his chamber towards Jerusalem, he kneeled "upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and "gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime." Never, surely, did the spirit and power of devotion shine forth with greater lustre, than at this time, in the person of Daniel upon his knees, in such circumstances. Let us, therefore, meditate for a while on an object which, as we are assured by the sequel, engaged the attention of Heaven itself.

If we consider the situation of Daniel in Babylon, it will teach us that we ought, on no account, to omit

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our daily devotions. And if we consider the manner of his praying, it will teach us how we ought to perform them.

With regard to Daniel's situation in Babylon, we may contemplate him as one in captivity in a strange and Heathen land; as one encumbered with the concerns of a vast empire; and as one in danger of his life for what he did.

It had been no wonder to have seen Daniel devout in Jerusalem. For there was the temple of God, the true church and worship, frequented by all his countrymen. There dwelt the Holy One of Israel; and the light of his countenance visited and shone continually upon them. But when Jerusalem was trodden down of the Gentiles, and the temple laid low in the dust; when the Lord had "covered the "daughter of Sion with a cloud in the day of his an-"ger;" when "the glory was departed from Israel," and Daniel, with the rest of those that escaped the slaughter, had been led away into captivity among infidels and scoffers; that the holy fire of devotion should burn and shine through all these disadvantages and temptations, this was indeed a sight which God himself delighted to behold; as such devotion could spring from nothing else but that love of him in the heart, mentioned by king Solomon, which "many "waters cannot quench, neither can the floods "drown it;" all the sorrows and afflictions in the world cannot extinguish it; but it will break through, and triumph gloriously; as we find it did, in the case before us. In Babylon, as well as in Jerusalem, "Daniel prayed three times a day." And there are

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two circumstances mentioned, which seem to have contributed towards keeping his faith and devotion alive and vigorous in those worst of times, namely, meditation in the Scriptures, and a severe temperance. For in the ninth chapter he tells us, that "he "understood by books the number of the years "whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah "the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy "years in the desolation of Jerusalem." And in the first chapter we have an account of his refusing the luxuries of the regal table, and choosing to live upon diet of the plainest kind. Through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, therefore, he had hope, and lived in expectation of seeing the divine promises accomplished, in the restoration of Israel to their own land, and the rebuilding of the temple, for which he continually prayed: while, by a strict and holy abstinence, he kept his heart from being ensnared by the good things of Babylon, and suffered not his body to gain the ascendant over his soul. O great and glorious example to every Israelite in Babylon, that is, to every *Christian* in the *world!* Let *him* likewise understand, by the divine books, the writings of the prophets and apostles, that the time approaches, when the church universal shall be delivered from her captivity and the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God; and therefore, as a stranger and pilgrim here upon earth, let him abstain from fleshly lusts, and not be brought under the power of sense; praying always, and hastening unto the coming of the day of God. This if he shall neglect to do, let him know assuredly, that Daniel will rise

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up in the judgement against him, and condemn him. And much more so, if living in a Christian country, where the true church and worship are established, he shall omit to do that which Daniel never omitted to do among his Heathen enemies.

But perhaps we have too much business upon our hands to spare time for our devotions. Time is very precious with most people, when they are to perform their devotions; and if they have not enough for every body, they generally make free, in the first place, with their Creator. But let these men of business consider the case of Daniel. Have they more business than he had, who was the first of the three presidents appointed to receive and audit all the accounts of a hundred and twenty princes set over the vast empire of Persia, of which, at that time, almost all the kingdoms of the earth were provinces? It would puzzle one to conceive a man in a situation that would afford him less leisure. Yet all this business did Daniel discharge faithfully and punctually, and found time to pray, and give thanks before his God, thrice every day constantly. The same we may observe of king David; who, though frequently engaged in war, as well as the management of a kingdom, yet made and kept the very same resolution as to his devotions. "At evening, and at morning, and "at noon day," says he, "will I pray, and that in-"stantly, and he shall hear my voice." Nay, this did not content him in the matter of thanksgiving; for, "seven times a day," says he elsewhere, "do I "praise thee, because of thy righteous judgements." And it was he who, amidst all the cares of state, com-

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posed and sung to the harp those divine hymns, which have been the delight of the faithful from that day to this, and shall be so to the end of the world. To these examples from the sacred history we may add that of a prince of our own, the great and good king Alfred, whose wisdom and diligence restored this kingdom from a state of the greatest confusion to one of the most perfect order, and preserved it in the same all the while he sat upon the throne. Yet no less than eight hours out of the four and twenty, did this monarch, so engaged, allot to reading, meditation, and prayer. Now all these are matters of fact, and show us what may be done by persons who will set to work in good earnest, and make a prudent disposition of their time. For in one of these two respects it is most certain that man must be deficient, who pretends that he cannot find time to serve God, since Daniel, when prime minister in the court of Persia, "prayed and gave thanks before his God, "three times a day."

And this he continued to do, even when the law was passed which made it certain death. "When Da-"niel knew that the writing was signed, he went to "his house, and, his windows being open in his cham-"ber towards Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees "three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks "before his God, as he did aforetime." He did his duty exactly according to his usual custom, as if nothing had happened, and no law had been passed, or any thing said at court about it. He would not go to any other place where his enemies might not have found him, but went to his own house, whither

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he might suppose they would follow him. He would not secrete himself in any private or remote corner of the house, but repaired forthwith to his own chamber, the place whereunto he always resorted. He thought it not enough to pray inwardly with his mind, which he might have done in any posture, without being perceived, but made his body bear its accustomed part in the service; "He kneeled upon his "knees." He contented not himself with praying once, or twice only, dropping the third time in the middle of the day, on account of the imminent danger he was in, but made up his full and usual complement: "He kneeled upon his knees three times a "day." Nor did he *pray* only, and not *give thanks*, cutting off some part of the service, to make the time of danger shorter, but performed the whole, without curtailing or diminishing aught: "He prayed "and gave thanks before his God, as he did afore-"time." And, in short, he would not so much as shut his windows, but did all this, "his windows in "his chamber being open towards Jerusalem." In order to show the meaning of this last circumstance, we must have recourse to a noble passage in king Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple, which Daniel had in his eye, and by which he directed his conduct. 1 Kings, viii. 46, &c. "If thy "people sin against thee, for there is no man that "sinneth not, and thou be angry with them, and de-"liver them to the enemy, so that they carry them "away captives to the land of the enemy, far or near; "yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land "whither they were carried captives, and repent, and

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"make supplication unto thee in the land of them "that carried them away captives, saying, We have "sinned, and have done perversely, we have com- "mitted wickedness; and so return unto thee with "all their heart, and with all their soul, in the land "of their enemies which led them away captive, and "*pray unto thee toward the land which thou gavest* "*unto their fathers, the city which thou hast chosen,* "*and the house which I have built for thy name;* "then hear thou their prayer and supplication in "heaven thy dwelling place, and maintain their cause, "and forgive thy people that have sinned against thee, "and all their transgressions wherein they have trans- "gressed against thee, and give them compassion be- "fore them that carried them captive, that they may "have compassion on them." The circumstance, therefore, of "praying towards Jerusalem" being thus enjoined, Daniel would by no means omit it. And now let us consider with ourselves, how clear the conscience, how holy the soul, how steadfast the faith, how lively the hope, how fervent the charity, how invincible the courage of Daniel must have been, who, in such circumstances, could calmly and composedly go on in the regular and exact performance of his stated devotions! Let us consider of how great consequence the due performance of them is, if, with death in his most horrible form before his eyes, he thought he could not justify a single omission of them. And whenever we are attempted to neglect our prayers, let us remember that Daniel, though the den of lions was to be the consequence, "kneeled "upon his knees three times a day, and prayed,

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"and gave thanks before his God, as he did afore-
"time."

We have now taken a view of the situation of Daniel in Babylon. We have considered him as one in captivity in a strange and Heathen land; as one encumbered with the concerns of a vast empire; and as one in danger of his life for what he did; and hence we have been convinced, it is to be hoped, that nothing ought to make us omit our daily devotions.

From the same great example we may learn how we ought to perform them, with regard to place, posture, time, and matter.

As to place, Daniel, we find, "went to his house, "and shut himself up in his chamber." And our blessed Lord has enjoined us all to do the same. "Thou when thou prayest, enter into thy chamber, "and shut the door." And the reason is plain. He who would pray, must first retire. The spirit of the world and the spirit of prayer are contrary the one to the other; and experience will teach any one that he cannot well pray in a crowd. Business, or pleasure, or even common conversation, if it be about the things of this world, and continue for any long time, will strangely indispose the mind for devotion; and the soul, before she can take her flight to heaven, must plume and balance her wings by holy meditation. She must rally her scattered and dissipated thoughts, and fix them on the business she is going about. She must consider the nature of God, to whom she is to pray; of herself, who is to pray to him; and of those things, for which she is to pray to him. She must

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know the sins she has been guilty of, to confess them; and the graces she stands in need of, to petition for them. All this is not to be done but by deep meditation; and meditation, which is the mother of devotion, is the daughter of retirement. They who do not meditate, cannot pray; and they who do not retire, can do neither. God help and have mercy on all those who are in this most wretched and deplorable state; as all must be, who pass their days in a senseless round of vain amusements and diversions, in a continual hurry and dissipation of thought, ignorant of the benefits and comforts of the closet, and therefore ignorant of the true state of their minds, ignorant of their Saviour, ignorant of their duty, ignorant of every thing which they were sent into the world to learn. Thus they live, and—thus they die! If, therefore, we conceive a dread of such a life and such a death (and too great a dread we cannot conceive), let us learn of holy Daniel, to commune with our own heart, and with God, in our chamber. And then let us judge ourselves to have made some progress in the divine life, when the pleasures we find there are preferred, as every experienced Christian knows they ought to be preferred, to all the pleasures the world can offer.

Next to the place, we are to consider the posture in which Daniel prayed. He "kneeled upon his "knees, with his face towards Jerusalem." The Christian warrior differs from all others in this particular, that he is never so sure of conquest, as when he enters into the battle in this attitude. The adversary had rather find him in any situation than this;

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which is, indeed, the best posture of defence against all temptations whatsoever. Daniel was so entirely secure in it, that he valued not the roaring of all the lions in the den of Babylon, just opening their mouths to devour him. Nor need the devout soul regard a whit more the rage and fury of that "roaring lion," spoken of by the apostle "who goeth about conti-"nually up and down in the earth, seeking whom he "may devour." I say, the devout soul need not regard it; for we must not forget, that the posture of the body can profit nothing, unless it be accompanied with that disposition of mind, which it is designed to represent. We are found hypocrites, if we are not inwardly what we appear outwardly to be, when we fall upon our knees. For the intention of so doing is to testify an awful sense of the power and glory of God, and as deep an one of our own infirmity and unworthiness, under which we sink down to the earth from whence we were taken, and acknowledge ourselves to be but sinful dust and ashes. By this act, when rightly performed, the mind going along with it, we obey the divine command, "Hum-"ble yourselves under the mighty hand of God;" where the apostle addresses us as criminals under the hand of justice, uplifted to strike the fatal stroke, which there is no way of avoiding but by falling to the earth. In a word, the duty of prayer is founded upon the sufficiency of God, as an almighty Creator and Redeemer, and our wants, as sinful creatures; both which great truths we confess at once, by meekly kneeling upon our knees; and therefore this is the

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proper posture for prayer. But what shall we say of Daniel "setting his face towards Jerusalem," when he prayed? Are we to imitate him in that likewise? Undoubtedly. Not according to the letter, but the spirit. The old Jerusalem and temple are destroyed, to be rebuilt no more; in the room of which a new Jerusalem and a new temple have long since arisen. The new Jerusalem is the Christian church, and the Lord God and the Lamb are the temple. To Christ we must turn our eyes; in the union and communion of his church we must offer up our prayers. Daniel praying in Babylon looked towards Jerusalem; the Christian praying in the world should look towards heaven, towards that new, spiritual, and celestial city of the living God, whose foundations are upon the holy and everlasting hills, and which cannot be removed, but standeth fast for ever. Thither let him look, thither let him pray, in this land of his captivity.

But when, and how often is he to pray? With regard to this point also, Daniel will instruct him, who "kneeled upon his knees three times a day;" that is to say, in the words of holy David before cited, "at "morning, and at evening, and at noon day." What man is he that can help offering up his morning sacrifice of devotion, when awaking from sweet sleep, refreshed and renewed, he beholds all things as it were new created? The sun arises, and finds the cattle upon a thousand hills waiting for his appearance, and all the birds of the air ready to pay their tribute of thanksgiving for the return of his glorious

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and enlivening beams. And shall man—man, for whose use and benefit all these things were made —shall man alone lie buried in sleep, or, when arisen, forget to worship his God? Shall he not rather rouse all his affections at once, with these and the like strains of the sweet singer of Israel:—"Awake "up my glory, awake lute and harp," every organ of my body, and faculty of my soul; "I myself "will awake right early. O God, thou art my God; "early will I seek thee. I will sing of thy power, "O Lord, and praise thy mercy betimes in the "morning. I will magnify thee, O God my king, "and praise thy name for ever and ever. Every "day will I give thanks unto thee, and praise thy "name for ever and ever." Now is the time for us to take a view beforehand of every thing that is to be done in the day, to offer it to God with purity of intention, and pray for his grace to direct us in all things; but more especially in those instances in which we are most likely to need it; as the constitution, temper, situation, and circumstances of every person in the world make some particular temptations more dangerous to *him* than others. Again; who that was in his senses, when the evening closes upon him, and consigns him to the darkness of the night, would venture to go to sleep (when for aught he knows he may awake in another world) without having first examined himself concerning the thoughts, words, and actions of the day, and so confessed and repented him of the sins therein committed, as to have rendered himself a proper object of the divine

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mercy through Christ, into whose hands he should now commend his spirit, as he would do with his dying breath? Blessed is he, who thus begins and ends the day with God, and so passes a life of piety and peace. His sleep shall be sweet indeed. And sweetest of all shall be that last sleep, out of which he shall awake to glory in the morning of the resurrection. With regard to Daniel's third hour of prayer, namely, noon, if they who have it not in their power to retire for that purpose, would accustom themselves daily to think, at that hour, on Christ, who was then nailed to the cross for their sins, and lift up their souls to God in a short prayer for salvation by him, they would find themselves much strengthened and refreshed thereby. As to those whom God has blessed with more leisure, let them by all means follow Daniel's example, till they can find a better. Let them "kneel upon their knees THREE times a day;" and let those who retire at that season to adorn their persons, take the opportunity of putting on the ornaments of grace, and renewing the spirit of their minds.

Lastly, this same great and fruitful example of holy Daniel affords us a direction likewise as to the matter of our devotions. He "prayed and gave "thanks before his God, as he did aforetime." Prayer and thanksgiving, therefore, were the two parts of his daily service. What the nature of his prayer was, we may know from that recorded in the ninth chapter, where he sets himself to confess his sins, and those of his countrymen, and to entreat for mercy

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on Jerusalem, with a fervour and affection never to be exceeded. Our devotions, then, according to this model, must consist of confession of sins; deprecation of the punishments and judgements acknowledged to be justly due to them; supplication for pardon, deliverance, and grace; and intercession for the church, and all included in her, our relations, friends, countrymen, and fellow Christians, and more especially for all the sons and daughters of affliction; the whole to be concluded with thanksgiving[a]; concerning which we may observe that no situation in this world can exclude the necessity, and take away the ground of it; since we find Daniel "giving "thanks," when the city and temple of God were in ashes, and himself a captive in Babylon. Even then he not only "prayed," but also "gave thanks before "his God, as he did aforetime." And indeed nothing but a brutish stupidity can hinder any man from seeing reason to thank God, so long as he grants him life and space, by repentance and faith, to secure to himself a part and portion in the glories of eternity. The poorest beggar, in rags upon a dunghill, ought to bless and praise the Lord without ceasing, that he has yet that privilege allowed him; a privilege denied to so many thousand miserable spirits; whose day of grace has long since expired in the night of everlasting death. Whatever, therefore, be our lot

[a] Let me be permitted to recommend to the reader, for his companion and directory in this way, *The Devotions of Bishop* Andrews, *translated from the Greek by Dean* Stanhope; a new and beautiful edition of which has been lately printed for Messrs. Rivington, in St. Paul's Church-yard.



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in this world, let us remember the apostolical injunction, "In all things give thanks;" and in order to stir ourselves up to the obeying it, let us only recount the mercies we have received through our Lord Jesus Christ, at sundry times, and in divers manners, spiritual and temporal, from the day of our birth to this present moment; and the result will be, it must be, that we shall all, the poorest and most afflicted among us, make the Psalmist's resolution our own; "I will always give thanks unto the Lord, his praise "shall ever be in my mouth:" and whenever, like holy Daniel, we kneel "upon our knees to pray," we shall, at the same time, like him, "give thanks "before our God."

Thus therefore, does Daniel not only strip us of every excuse for neglecting our devotions, but gives us likewise full instructions how to perform them, with regard to place, posture, time, and matter. And let the blessed effect and reward of his devotion fire our souls to an imitation of so great and glorious an example. Would we be delivered from the power of the devil, and the bitter pains of eternal death? Would we be holy, and just, and good? Would we be filled with wisdom and understanding in the counsels of the Almighty? Would we be high in the favour of Heaven? Nay, would we be saved from temporal calamities, and brought to honour, esteem, and reverence, in the sight of men? Constancy in prayer can open a way to all these blessings. For if we ask, why Daniel was preserved from the lions? Why he was endued with such innocency of life? Why he was admitted into the secrets of the divine economy?

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Why he was styled, by way of eminence, "the man "greatly beloved?" and why the name of God was glorified by his promotion in a Heathen court? The answer to all is—"He kneeled upon his knees three "times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before "his God."



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# DISCOURSE XXI.

## THE REDEMPTION OF TIME.

EPHESIANS, v. 16.

*Redeeming the time.*

MAN is often in Scripture compared to a merchant; and there are three things more especially, which, considered in that capacity, he is enjoined to purchase at any rate. The first is the kingdom of heaven, likened by our Saviour, in one of his parables, to a "pearl of great price, which a merchant "having met with, went and sold all that he had, "and bought it." The second is truth. "Buy the "truth," saith Solomon, "and sell it not." The third purchase we are to make is that mentioned in the text: "Redeeming the time." And this, indeed, opens the way to the other two; since it is by a right employment of our time, that we come to a knowledge and love of the truth, which leads us to the kingdom of heaven, through him who is "the way, "the truth, and the life."

The phrase, "redeeming the time," supposes us

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to have been formerly negligent in this sort of spiritual traffic, and so to have suffered loss; which, therefore, we are to make up, by taking every opportunity of trading to advantage for the future.

The inestimable value and right improvement of time are, therefore, the subjects suggested to our meditations by these words of the apostle; in the prosecution of which let us consider, why time should be redeemed, and how it may be redeemed.

Time, little as men account of it, is the most choice and precious thing in the world. "The mer-"chandise of it is better than the merchandise of "silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold." And this God seems to have pointed out to us, by the very manner of his giving it, so different from that in which he vouchsafes his other gifts. For, whereas he is graciously pleased to bestow many of them upon us in large quantities, so that we can keep some store of them by us, with time it is not so. Of that there is but a moment in the world at once, which is taken away when another is given. If therefore the value of a thing rises in proportion to its scarceness, what shall a man give, or rather what shall he not give, for the redemption of time, which is thus dealt out by Heaven, like some rich and invaluable cordial, in single drops, to the end, doubtless, that not one of them should be suffered to fall to the ground? We take no account of time, but by the loss of it; the clock which strikes, informs us—not that we have so much in our possession, but that so much is gone from us; for which reason it hath been styled "the "knell of a departed hour," which rings out for the

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death of another portion of our time, admonishing us to make a better use of that which remains. The present moment only is our own. As to the future, God alone knows whether they will ever be present to us: and for the past, they are never more to return; which is a

Second reason why time ought to be redeemed by all means in our power, because, when once past it never returns. The merchant, who knows that there is a precious commodity to be purchased at a reasonable rate, by which his fortune may be made at once; and knows withal, that, if he miss this, he shall never have such another opportunity; what pains will he not take? How early will he rise? how late take rest? How diligent will he be in fitting out his vessel? With what haste will he put to sea? With what earnestness and anxiety will he watch the wind, and spread all his sails, to catch every breath that may waft him in time to the port from which he is bound? This is our very case to a tittle. Time is that precious commodity, by a right use of which our fortunes are made for ever, for ever and ever, to all eternity. And time, when once gone, never returns. For where is yesterday? It is "with the "years beyond the flood;" and we can as soon bring back one as the other. Were all the princes of the earth to unite the wisdom of their counsels, and the might of their kingdoms, they could not recall one single moment. How plain and obvious is this to the common sense of every man! But who is there, that pays so much regard to this well-known truth, as to regulate his conduct by it, and to make his

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actions conformable to his knowledge? Where is the Christian, who, in order to secure a portion in the glories of eternity by a right employment of his time, useth half the diligence which is commonly used by the merchants of the earth to purchase an uncertain tenure of its perishable goods? But so it is, that let us look where we will, whenever the things of this world are in view; we find men acting, in their several professions and callings, according to the best and most approved maxims of each; projecting their schemes wisely, and executing them vigorously; in a word, taking their measures as if they were in earnest: whereas, behold the same men considered as Christians, engaged in the concerns of a better world; and a view of their conduct is really sufficient to make a thinking unbeliever conclude that nine parts in ten of them either believe no more than himself, or else that a statute of lunacy ought forthwith to be taken out against them. If therefore we acknowledge, that time once past never returns, let us acknowledge likewise that this is a good reason why we should redeem what is past, by making a right use of what is present. And let us act accordingly.

A third reason why time ought to be redeemed, is the consideration that it must be accounted for. A steward intrusted with the management of his lord's goods, and a person employed to trade for another, should of all men be the most diligent and careful; seeing that at a certain stated time they are to deliver in an account of what they received, and the profits they have made; upon the fidelity and exactness of which their future welfare is to depend. By these

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two cases our Lord has thought proper to represent to us our state and condition in this life, in the parable of the unjust steward, and that of the ten talents. The goods and talents committed to our trust, to manage and improve to the best advantage, are all the gifts of God, whether those of nature, fortune, or grace, that is, in short, every thing we are, and every thing we have. Of the use and improvement we shall have made of all these, an account is to be delivered in at a day appointed; and our eternal welfare depends upon its being such a one as will abide the strict scrutiny of him who committed them to us. The steward, who appeared to have wasted his lord's goods, was dismissed from his service; and from the unprofitable servant, who, instead of trading with his talent, buried it in the earth, that talent was taken, and he was "cast into outer darkness, where was "weeping and gnashing of teeth." Now time being, as I have shown, one of the choicest and most precious gifts of God to men, will, at the last great day, be accounted for with a strictness proportionable to its value. Let us, therefore, take care that the accuser of the brethren, the ever watchful and malicious adversary of our salvation, have it not in his power to lodge an accusation against us with our Lord, of our having wasted that good thing committed to us; of having hidden that most precious talent in the earth, instead of trading with it to the best advantage; of having killed and buried our time in sensuality, sloth, and idleness. For this murder, like others, will not always be concealed; the hours destroyed in secret will appear, when we least expect it, to the unspeak-

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able terror and amazement of our souls; they arise from the dead, and fly away to heaven (whither they might have carried better news), and there tell sad tales of us, which we shall be sure to hear of again, when we hold up our hands at the bar, and they shall come as so many swift witnesses against us. The consideration, therefore, that we are to account for our time will be allowed as a third reason why it should be redeemed.

A fourth, and that no less strong and powerful than the former, is the shortness and uncertainty of human life. No man knows precisely when his accounts will be called for; but this he does know most infallibly, that it cannot be very long, and it may be very soon. "Why, alas! does mortal man think to "live long, when he cannot promise to himself the "next minute! How many have lamentably deceived "their own hearts in this point, and been sud-"denly snatched away! How often do we hear, "how often do we read, such a man is slain, "another is drowned, a third has broken his neck "with a fall; this man died eating, and that "playing; one perished by fire, another by the "sword, another of a disease, another was slain by "thieves! Thus death is quickly the end of all, and "man's life passeth away like a shadow that depart-"eth[a];" like a tale that is told; like a flower that fadeth; like a post that hasteth by; like a bubble that rises, and shines, and sinks again into the common mass; like a vapour that appeareth for a little while,

[a] Kempis.

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and then vanisheth. This again is a truth universally acknowledged, insomuch that it is difficult to be for an hour in company, where the rapid progress of time is not made the subject of an observation. And yet we are under such a delusion in our reckonings of this matter, that although the time past be certain, and that which is future be to the last degree uncertain, yet we regard the former as nothing, and trust to the latter as if we could demand at least half the days of Methuselah, and had entered an effectual caveat against any claim which death might have upon us, until the expiration of four hundred years. Whereas "though men be so strong," that sometimes, and that but very seldom indeed, comparatively speaking, "they come to fourscore years, yet "is their strength then but labour and sorrow; so "soon passeth it away, and we are gone." And what use does the Psalmist make of this consideration? It follows in the next verse but one; "Lord, teach "us so to number our days, that we may apply our "hearts unto wisdom;" that is, teach us so to meditate on the shortness of our time, that we may improve it aright to the purposes of salvation. The same reflection, and the same inference drawn from it, occur in the xxxixth Psalm: "When thou with rebukes "dost chasten man for sin, thou makest his beauty "to consume away like as it were a moth fretting a "garment: every man therefore is but vanity." This thought melts the heart of the royal suppliant into a religious tenderness; and, dissolved in penitential tears, he pours forth the following most affecting strains, that should be continually in the mouth

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of the Christian pilgrim. "Hear my prayer, O "Lord, and with thine ears consider my calling; "hold not thy peace at my tears; for I am a stranger "with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were. "O spare me a little, that I may recover my strength "before I go hence, and be no more seen." It may be farther observed, upon this head, that we may learn an useful lesson from an enemy. It is said of the devil, that "he is come down upon the earth, "having great wrath, because he knoweth that he "hath but a short time." Now, if the shortness of the time allowed be an argument with him for labouring hard to destroy our souls, surely it ought to be one with us for labouring as hard to save them; especially if we consider what that work is, and the difficulty of accomplishing it, which shall therefore be the

Fifth argument adduced for the redemption of time. Time ought to be redeemed, because of the work we have to do, and the difficulty of doing it. Did we see the husbandman dreaming away his time, when all his fields lay uncultivated; or the generals of an army killing an hour at cards, when the enemy was preparing to storm the camp; or a pilot asleep, when the ship was running directly upon a rock; and did all these allege, as the reason of their behaviour, that they had *nothing to do*, we should think a madhouse the only proper place for them; and we should think right. But why do we not perceive, that there is not less of absurdity and madness in the conduct of that Christian, who wastes his precious hours in idleness, and apologizes for it by saying, in the same

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manner, that he has *nothing to do:* when perhaps the work of salvation, that greatest of all works, the very work for which God sent him into the world, is not yet so much as entered upon, or even thought of? The heart lies fallow; it is overrun with corrupt lusts and evil affections; the ground not yet broken up, much less the seed sown; and the time of harvest approaching: the Christian husbandman, it seems, is dreaming, for he has *nothing to do.* The world, the flesh, and the devil, have united their forces, and temptation is at the gates ready to carry all before it: the Christian warrior is taking his pastime, for he has *nothing to do.* The poor weather-beaten soul is driving, at the mercy of winds and waves, upon the stormy and tempestuous sea of this troublesome world, amidst rocks and quicksands: the Christian steersman is asleep, for he has *nothing to do.* Our Lord bids us watch and pray; he orders us to strive to enter in at the strait gate, by the narrow way; he enjoins us to labour for the meat that endureth; his apostle presses it upon us to work out our salvation; yet we can persuade ourselves, that we have *nothing to do.* How is it then? Are temptations fewer than they were, so that there is no danger of falling into them, though we do not watch and pray against them? Is the gate grown wider, or the way made broader, so that we may enter in without striving? Will the meat that endureth, any more than that which perisheth, drop into our mouths without labouring for it? Can we obtain salvation *now*, without working it out? Such news, perhaps, is sometimes brought us, and it cannot but

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be agreeable to flesh and blood. There is only one misfortune, which is, that it cannot possibly be true, the Gospel of Jesus Christ being intended for the use of all ages and generations, and therefore remaining, like its divine Author, "the same yesterday, "to-day, and for ever." Nay, it seems to be a truth as clear as Scripture and experience can make any truth, that the world grows worse as it grows older; consequently, the difficulty of working out our salvation is increased in proportion, and fresh force is daily added to the apostolical argument; "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil." And thus much for the fifth reason why time ought to be redeemed, namely, the work we have to do, and the difficulty of doing it.

The last reason shall be this, because we have already lost so large a proportion of the time allowed us for the purpose. For if we consider, how many of our first years passed in a state of childhood; how many more were played away in the heat and folly of youth; how long it was before we sat down to reflect upon our true condition in this world, upon the works which Christ had done for us, and those which he had enjoined us to do, through his grace, for ourselves; how high we might by this time have stood in the scale of virtue, had we well employed the numberless hours which we certainly *might* have well employed, and withal how low we now stand, by having neglected so to employ them; I say, if we seriously consider these things (for very serious considerations they are), we shall think it but reasonable that we endeavour by double diligence to repair

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former neglects—*reasonable*, did I say? We shall embrace every opportunity with joy, and on our bended knees adore that mercy, so much beyond all we could hope for, which has made it possible for us by any means to redeem the time we have lost. For although this loss, through a strange thoughtlessness and blindness of mind, generally troubles and afflicts us less than any other, yet think what tribulation and anguish will seize upon us, if by these means our work should be found unfinished at the day of death! How precious will the hours then seem, that have formerly been thrown away on trifles! How many worlds shall we then be ready to offer for one of them? And who can say, that it will be granted? Think on those wretched spirits who misspent their time while in the body, and are therefore now entered upon their portion of everlasting sorrow. What would they give for the opportunity vouchsafed us of being reconciled to God, and bringing forth fruits meet for repentance? Could any of them be released from their prison-house, and sent back into the world for one year, in how holy and heavenly a manner would they spend it! How deeply would they mourn for their sins! How fervently would they pray for pardon! How earnestly would they exhort others to do likewise! What therefore they would do, to be delivered from the bitter pains of eternal death, let us do, to avoid falling into them. I shall close this head with that amazing description, given us by St. John in his Revelation, of a transaction which is one day to happen. "I saw another mighty angel come "down from heaven, clothed with a cloud, and a

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"rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as "it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire. "And he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left "foot on the earth, and cried with a loud voice, as "when a lion roareth, and when he had cried, seven "thunders uttered their voices." But this wonderful and glorious person has a message to deliver to the inhabitants of the world, far more terrible than his cry, or the seven thunders that followed it: "And "he lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware by him "that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven "and the things that therein are, and the earth "and the things that therein are, and the sea and the "things that are therein, that THERE SHOULD BE "TIME NO LONGER." The proper inference surely is this; "While WE HAVE TIME, let us do good "unto all men."

These, then, are the reasons why time should be redeemed; because it is the most choice and precious thing in the world; because, when once gone, it never returns; because it is to be accounted for; because it is so short and uncertain; because of the work we have to do, and the difficulty of doing it; and because we have already lost so large a proportion of the time allowed us to do it in.

In order to show how time *may* be redeemed, permit me to lay down a few short rules for the management and improvement of it.

First, *Observe a method in the distribution of your time.* Every hour will then know its proper employment, and no time will be lost. Idleness will be shut out at every avenue, and with her that numerous

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body of vices, that make up her train[b]. This method must vary, according to the different callings and circumstances of mankind. They whom God hath blessed with plentiful fortunes, which set them above the necessity of engaging in any profession, are happy in this respect, that they have more command of their time, and consequently may give a larger proportion of it to the improvement of their minds by reading, meditation, and prayer, as well as to the employment of discovering and relieving the wants of their poor neighbours. They, on the other hand, who must go forth to their work and to their labour, whether of mind or body, are happy in this respect, that a great part of their time is laid out for them, and they are prevented from wasting it in idleness, by the order of Providence. Be it their care to consecrate their labour to God, by regarding it as a penance imposed on them for sin, and performing it in a spirit of contentment and resignation, cheerfulness and joy; even as Christ performed his, looking for and hasting to that time, when they shall enter into the promised rest. In the morning let the mind be seasoned with devotion and heavenly wisdom, to fit it for its employment; and in the evening, to prepare it for its repose. Let the sabbaths and festivals of the church

[b] It may be added, as a supplement to this rule—*Have always some work in hand, which may be going on, during the many intervals (for many there will always be) both of business and pleasure.* On this part of the subject read the Rambler, Vol. III. No. 108, and consider well the instance of Erasmus, there adduced. Read likewise Spectator, Vol. II. No. 93, 94, and Vol. IV. No. 316.

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be in no sense days of idleness, much less of vice and folly; but given to the works of religion and charity; that they may be to us, what they were designed to be to all, minute representations of the Sabbath that remaineth for the people of God; little preludes to that everlasting jubilee, that shall be one day celebrated in the heavenly Canaan. Woe be to that man who wastes these hallowed portions of his time upon the concerns of the world and the lusts of the flesh, doing nothing, or worse than nothing: stranger to the resurrection of Jesus, the glories of the saints, and the joys of heaven, he rejects the pledges of his eternal inheritance, and throws those jewels into the mire, that should have adorned his crown of righteousness.

Secondly, *Be moderate in your recreations.* Recreations, we all know, are necessary. It is the Christian's concern to take care that they are innocent; which they will be, if they give rise to no evil passion, such as anger, or avarice, too generally attendants upon games of all sorts; and if no more time be spent in them than is necessary to unbend the mind, and fit it for a return to its employment. But when recreation becomes, as of late in this nation, a trade and a profession, and is made a means of putting the soul upon the rack of contending passions, it no longer deserves the name, but is in reality a drudgery imposed by the adversary of human happiness upon those who will not give their time to the service of their Maker. In one word, it is *Egypt* and the *taskmasters* over again. From which we have reason



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to pray that our good Lord would vouchsafe to deliver us all!

Thirdly, *Cut off, as much as may be, unnecessary visits.* Of all thieves, they are the worst who rob us of our time, because for the loss of that no amends can ever be made us[c]. And there are in every place some who, being idle themselves, do their best endeavours to make others so; in which work, partly through a disposition in those others to be made so, and partly through a false fear and shame, which hinders them from fraying away such birds of prey, they are too often suffered to succeed. An assembly of such persons can be compared to nothing but a *slaughter-house*, where the precious hours, and oftentimes the character of all their friends and acquaintance, are butchered without mercy. And, perhaps, there are few maxims that have more truth in them, than one laid down by a great master in the art of *Holy Living*: "No man can be provident of his "*time*, who is not prudent in the choice of his *com-* "*pany*."

Lastly, *Examine, every evening, how you have spent the day.* For how can that man know the state of his affairs who keeps no account? The task, at first, will be irksome, and the adversary will try every way to make you neglect, and by degrees drop the practice. And why? Because he knows that no person who continues it will long remain under his power. It will let you into some secrets that will greatly shock and alarm you. But you must know

[c] On the *Robbery of Time*, see a most excellent paper in the Idler, Vol. I. No. 14.

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your follies; how else can you reform them? Whereas, when a constant and faithful performance of this exercise, the benefits and advantages of which are without number and without end, has brought you acquainted with your errors, every day will correct those of the preceding. You will find that God has given you time enough for every good purpose[d], but none to waste. You will soon know the true value of time, and become an adept in the management of it.—And of this be assured, for your comfort and encouragement, that the time rightly employed, be it when it may, is with God "an acceptable time;" and that every day well spent is to yourselves "a day of sal-"vation."

[d] This seems to be intimated to us in that question of our Lord—"Are there not twelve hours in the day?" John, xi. 9.



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# DISCOURSE XXII.

## PATIENCE PORTRAYED.

I TIMOTHY, VI. 11.

*Follow after patience.*

AMONG all the graces that adorn a Christian soul, like so many jewels of various colours and lustres, against the day of her espousals to the Lamb of God, there is not one more brilliant than this of patience; not one which brings more glory to God, or contributes so much towards making and keeping peace on earth; not one which renders a man more happy within himself, more agreeable to all about him: insomuch that even they who themselves possess it not, yet are sure to commend it in others. They set their seal to the truth, though by so doing they condemn their own practice. Patience is a virtue common to us with God; it is the characteristic of Christ, and the leading precept of the Gospel; it is recommended by the examples of all the saints; rendered necessary by the present state of man; and set off by the manifold inconveniences of its contrary, impatience, as well as its own incomparable excellences and advan

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tages. By enlarging upon these particulars, I shall endeavour to recommend this celestial grace to your esteem, and excite you to the attainment of so invaluable a treasure.

I. In the first place, patience is a virtue common to us with God. *Long-suffering* is his darling attribute; and what is dear in his sight, ought not to be less precious in ours. And how marvellous is *his* patience, who daily pours his blessings on those men, who as daily offend, affront, and dishonour him; making his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, sending rain on the unjust as well as the just, and not excluding the worst of us from those blessings, to the least of which the best of us have no title! For the benefit of the guilty as well as the innocent, of the impious as well as the pious, of the ungrateful as well as the grateful, the seasons take their rounds, the elements work together, the light and air exert their kindly influences, the fountains send forth their salutary streams, the corn fields grow yellow, the grapes ripen upon the vines, the boughs of the fruit trees bend down, the groves are clothed, and the pastures flourish. The Gospel is still preached to those who slight it; salvation is still held forth to those who have so often dashed it from them; Christ is still offered to those who have blasphemed him. And although God be provoked every day, yet he holds his hand, and waits patiently, till the last minute of man's trial and the world's duration be past. Although he have the power in his own hands, and the weapons of his indignation are all ready, he defers to strike, if perhaps men may at length be led by his

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long-suffering to repentance; "because he wills not "the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be "converted, and live;" and while judgement sleeps, mercy calls night and day to sinners, "Why will "ye die? Repent, and ye shall be forgiven; turn "ye, and ye shall live." Yet God's blessings are abused to the purposes of luxury and lasciviousness; his truth is denied; his commandments are broken; his church is persecuted; his ministers are insulted; his Son is crucified afresh; and his own long-suffering is made an argument against his existence—and he is still patient. What is man, then, that he should complain?

II. The patience which we so much admire in God, shone forth yet more amazingly in the person of his Son Jesus Christ. For was ever patience like that patience, which, descending from a throne of glory, bore a long imprisonment in the womb, to sanctify sinners; and lay in a stable, to bring them to a kingdom? Behold the Master baptized by the servant, and he who alone could give remission of sins, submitting to be washed in the laver of regeneration. He fasts forty days, who filleth all things living with plenteousness, and who is himself the bread of life. He endures the temptation of Satan, and answers them one by one from the Scriptures, who could have remanded him to his chains in a moment by the word of his power. With his disciples he lived, not as their Lord, but the servant of all. How tenderly did he bear with all their ignorances and infirmities, leading them on gently, as they were able to follow him! And that they might never refuse to do offices of

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kindness for each other, he washed all their feet, and, amongst them, those of Judas, from whom he meekly received the kiss that betrayed him. How patiently did he endure the contradiction of sinners; and, in his disputes with the Jews, how lovingly did he try to persuade the incredulous, and to melt by kindness the hearts that were hardened! How quietly did he submit to the insolence of the proud, and give place to the fury of the wrathful, desirous, even to his last hour, to save, if possible, those murderers of the prophets, those rebels against their God! But when the time of his passion came, what railing and revilings were patiently heard by him, what mockery and insult he patiently suffered! How was he wounded, who heals every disease? How was he crowned with thorns, who crowns his martyrs with unfading garlands? How was "he stripped naked, who clothes "the field with flowers, and all the world with robes, "and the whole globe with the canopy of heaven, "and the dead with immortality?" How was he fed with gall and vinegar, who reaches out to his people the fruits of paradise, and the cup of salvation? Innocent and righteous, nay, innocence and righteousness itself, he was numbered with the transgressors. The truth was oppressed by false witnesses; he was judged who was to judge the world; the Word of God became dumb as a lamb before his shearers. And when at the crucifixion, the heavens were confounded, and the earth trembled, and the sun, that he might not be forced to behold the villany of the Jews, withdrew his shining, and left the world in darkness; still the blessed Jesus said nothing, and

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betrayed no emotion of anger, but endured without murmuring all that earth and hell could lay upon him, till he had put the last stroke to this most finished picture of perfect patience, and prayed for his murderers; whom he has been ever since, and is now, ready to receive, upon their repentance, not only to pardon, but to a participation of the glories of his kingdom.

III. The patience thus practised by Christ is enjoined by his holy Gospel, being, indeed, the badge of that Gospel and its professors. For thus saith the blessed Jesus to all his disciples: "Ye have heard "that it hath been said by them of old times, thou "shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. "But I say unto you, love your enemies, and pray "for them which despitefully use you and persecute "you; that ye may be the children of your Father "which is in heaven, who maketh his sun to rise on the "evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just "and on the unjust." Is the mind tempted to impatience by the disappointment of its desires, and the loss of worldly goods and enjoyments? The Scripture, to eradicate the temptation, is full of precepts enjoining us to contemn the world, and not to set our hearts upon things that pass away, and that cannot satisfy the soul, when it is possessed of them. If our desires after these perishable goods are immoderate, our impatience at the loss of them will be always in proportion. And then how shall he ever fulfil the royal law of charity, or willingly give away his money, who cannot part with it patiently, when God in the course of his providence is pleased to re-

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sume his own again? The worldly man is always impatient, because he prefers his body to his soul; the Christian prefers his soul to his body, and therefore knows how to give largely, and to lose patiently. Nay, he can be meek and resigned under all the injuries which malice can offer to his person; and to him who smites him on the one cheek can present the other, rejoicing that he is counted worthy to suffer something for his Saviour, who suffered so much for him; and referring the decision of his cause to the righteous judgement of God at the last day. For what are we, that we should avenge ourselves, and not rather, by giving place unto wrath, at once disappoint the malice of the enemy, and secure to ourselves the patronage of Heaven?

IV. We find all the saints of God, who have been eminent for their faith in Christ, to have been as eminent for their patience, without which their faith must have failed in the day of trial; it being not through faith alone, but, as the apostle says, "through "faith and patience," that they "inherited the pro-"mises." Faith begat patience, which, like a dutiful child, proved the support of its parent. Abel, the first son of Adam celebrated for his faith, through patience continued faithful unto death, and so received the crown of life. Patience preserved Noah's faith all the time the ark was building, and while it floated upon the waters, which destroyed every thing else. Through patience Abraham endured the severest trial that faith was ever put to, and offered up his only son; who, through the same patience, neither lifted up his hand, nor opened his mouth against

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his father. Through patience, Jacob, persecuted by his brother, quietly departed out of his own country, and afterwards pacified him with gifts and presents. Through patience Joseph endured and forgave the ill usage of his brethren, and fed them in the time of dearth. Through patience Moses, so often abused, and insulted, and threatened to be stoned by a stiff-necked people, still entreated the Lord for them. Through patience David would not slay his implacable enemy Saul, when he had him in his power, and afterwards revenged his death by executing the person who slew him. Through patience Job endured the loss of all things, and the utmost malice of the tempter, and came forth as choice gold from the furnace of adversity, an example for all ages and generations to follow. Through patience St. Paul lived a life of incessant toil and trouble, and rested not till he had accomplished the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus, and preached the Gospel to the Heathen world. Through patience, in a word, the glorious company of the apostles, the goodly fellowship of the prophets, and the noble army of martyrs and confessors, fought the good fight, finished their course, and kept the faith, neither allured nor terrified from their duty, but triumphing, upon the rack and in the flames, over the world, the flesh, and the devil, and going to "the kingdom," through "the patience of "Jesus Christ."

V. The present state of man renders the practice of this virtue absolutely necessary for him, if he would enjoy any happiness here or hereafter. Could we, indeed, live in the world without suffering, then

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were there no need of patience. But thus runs the universal sentence: "Cursed is the ground for thy "sake. In sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days "of thy life: thorns also and thistles shall it bring "forth to thee. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou "eat bread, till thou return to the ground out of "which thou wast taken." By this sentence are we all bound, as by a chain of adamant; and every man, "from him that sitteth upon the throne to him that "lieth in the dungeon," must have labour and sorrow for his portion, till he depart out of this mortal life. And to this sad truth we all bear testimony, as soon as we come into it. The cries of the new-born infant testify that it is born to sorrow. Tribulation, thus necessarily entailed upon us, admits of no remedy but patience; the reasonableness of which is strongly enforced by the consideration, that *our* sufferings are the punishment of our sins. We indeed "receive the due reward of our deeds;" one man only suffered, who "had done nothing amiss." In Christians it is more especially requisite, who, besides the ordinary calamities of life, have the devil with all his wiles to resist, the flesh with all its desires to mortify, the world with all its temptations and terrors to overcome. The devil cannot be resisted, the flesh cannot be mortified, the world cannot be overcome, without patience; by which alone repentance is perfected, faith is supported, hope is preserved alive, charity is nourished, and all those holy tempers are formed in us which Christ in his sermon on the mount hath pronounced *blessed;* yea, and they ever shall be blessed. We, therefore, surely have of all

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men the most need of patience, that after we have thereby done and suffered the will of God, we may receive the promises: for the promises are these—"He that endureth to the end shall be saved. Be "thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a "crown of life." But how shall we endure to the end? how shall we be faithful unto death, if we have not patience? as the wise man pathetically exclaims: "Woe unto you that have lost patience: and what "will ye do, when the Lord shall visit you[a]? Patience is the only armour that is proof against all assaults, and he who has well buckled it on, needeth not to fear any temptation. Money cannot tempt him who can endure poverty: honour cannot corrupt him who can endure disgrace; pleasure cannot seduce him who can endure pain; in short, nothing can prevail over him who can endure all things, waiting the Lord's time for his deliverance and reward. Over him the evil one hath no power; and all the comfort to be had in this world is his. It is vain to say, "Blessed is the man that hath no trou-"ble;" for there is no such man, nor ever was, nor ever will be; but we must say, "Blessed is the man "who best beareth that portion of trouble which "falleth to his share."

VI. The manifold inconveniences of impatience will set this truth off to great advantage. As patience is the attribute of God, impatience had its beginning from Satan. "Through envy of the devil," saith the wise man, "came death into the world."

[a] Ecclus. ii. 14.

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And whence proceeds envy, but from impatience of beholding the happiness of another? Impatience and malice therefore had one father, and they have grown together in his children ever since. An impatient desire of the forbidden fruit lost Paradise, which patience to persevere in obedience to the commandment, had preserved to this day. Impatient at beholding his brother's sacrifice accepted and his own rejected, Cain murdered Abel. Unable, through impatience, to bear the uneasiness of hunger, Esau sold his birthright. Through impatience the patriarchs, moved with envy at the love which Jacob bare to Joseph and the predictions of his exaltation, sold their brother into Egypt. Through impatience the Israelites, when Moses was gone up into the mount, turned aside to idolatry. Through impatience of a superior, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram became schismatics and rebels. And, to mention no more examples, through impatience of sound doctrine and wholesome reproof, the Jews killed the prophets, and crucified the Son of God. In a word, as patience is the foundation of all good, impatience is the seed-plot of all evil, which may not improperly be called "impatience of good;" as no man commences vicious, but for want of patience to persevere in virtue and to resist temptation. And as that which is the cause of sin can be but an ill cure for sorrow, he that is impatient under any load which it pleases God to lay upon him, only renders it heavier, and new points the thorns of the fall, that they may the more sensibly gall and afflict him. All sufferings are infinitely aggravated by impatience, and

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some owe their very being to it; insomuch that a peevish, fretful temper will be "vexed, even as a "thing that is raw," by every object it touches; it will most ingeniously contrive to keep itself always on the rack, on account of trifling incidents, which, in a mind endued with the grace of patience, could not have produced the least shadow of uneasiness. In this, therefore, as in other cases, God hath annexed a blessing to virtue, and hath made man's real happiness to consist in the performance of his duty.

Lastly, let me set before you, in one view, the incomparable excellences and advantages of this lovely grace of patience. Patience, then, commends us to God, and keeps us his. Patience is the guardian of faith, the preserver of peace, the cherisher of love, the teacher of humility: patience governs the flesh, strengthens the spirit, sweetens the temper, stifles anger, extinguishes envy, subdues pride; she bridles the tongue, refrains the hand, tramples upon temptations, endures persecutions, consummates martyrdom. Patience produces unity in the church, loyalty in the state, harmony in families and societies; she comforts the poor and moderates the rich; she makes us humble in prosperity, cheerful in adversity, unmoved by calumny and reproach; she teaches us to forgive those who have injured us, and to be the first in asking forgiveness of those whom we have injured; she delights the faithful, and invites the unbelieving; she adorns the woman, and approves the man; is loved in a child, praised in a young man, admired in an old man; she is beautiful in either sex, and every

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age. Behold her appearance and her attire. Her countenance is calm and serene as the face of heaven unspotted by the shadow of a cloud, and no wrinkle of grief or anger is seen in her forehead. Her eyes are as the eyes of doves for meekness, and on her eye-brows sit cheerfulness and joy. Her mouth is lovely in silence; her complexion and colour that of innocence and security; while, like the virgin, the daughter of Sion, she shakes her head at the adversary, despising and laughing him to scorn. She is clothed in the robes of the martyrs, and in her hand she holds a sceptre in the form of a CROSS. She rides not in the whirlwind and stormy tempest of passion, but her throne is the humble and contrite heart, and her kingdom is the kingdom of peace[b].

If, therefore, to be made like unto God; if to be conformed to the image of Christ; if to follow the precepts of the Gospel; if to write after the copies of saints; if to render our present state comfortable, and ensure our final redemption from sin and sorrow; if to avoid the manifold inconveniences of impatience, and enjoy the incomparable excellences and advantages of patience; if these are things desirable, let us from henceforth give ourselves to the pursuit of this divine virtue; let us "follow after patience." And for this purpose, let us adore and imitate the long-suffering of God; let us contemplate and transcribe into our practice the patience of Jesus Christ;

[b] The portrait here presented to the reader is copied from TERTULLIAN'S noble treatise on the subject, to which we owe that of CYPRIAN. This discourse is an abstract of both.

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let us study and fulfil the precepts of the Gospel; let us look at and emulate the examples of the saints; let us consider and alleviate the sorrows of our pilgrimage; let us perceive and avoid the horrible consequences of impatience; let us court till we obtain the heavenly grace of patience, with her dowry of benefits and blessings conferred on her by Jesus Christ, into whose patience the Lord direct your hearts, until she have her perfect work in the salvation of your souls, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed, as is most due, in all churches of the saints, blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, now and evermore. Amen.

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# DISCOURSE XXIII.

## THE GREAT ASSIZE.

ACTS, XVII. 31.

*He hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained.*

THE distinction between good and evil hath been from the beginning the great end of the law of Heaven, at sundry times and in divers manners promulgated to the sons of men. From this celestial fountain particular systems of human laws have been drawn forth, and adapted to the exigences of different ages and countries, by wise and good men; they have been enacted by the authority of kings with the advice of senates, and carried into execution by faithful and diligent magistrates, "to the punishment of "wickedness and vice, and to the maintenance of "true religion and virtue." The advantages of these institutions, and the praise and honour which are due from all mankind to those who employ the treasure of learning, and exert the powers of eloquence, for the public good, must be evident to every one who thinks but a moment upon the subject. The excel-



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lent Hooker closes a survey of law, in all its different departments, with the following encomium, conceived and expressed in a manner peculiar to himself: "Of "law there can be no less acknowledged, than that "her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the har-"mony of the world. All things in heaven and "earth do her homage; the very least as feeling her "care, and the greatest as not exempt from her "power. Both angels, and men, and creatures of "what condition soever, though each in different sort "and manner, yet all with uniform consent, ad-"miring her as the mother of their peace and "joy."

But true and just altogether as this character of law in general most certainly is, yet it must be confessed, that the penal sanctions of human laws will not always come up to the necessity of the case, nor will the medicine reach the disorder, in a multitude of instances. It is in the power of the civil magistrate to chastise many public enormities, to regulate in some measure the external deportment of men, and to preserve the frame of society from suffering those convulsions which must otherwise bring on a speedy dissolution. But when prudence hath enacted all her statutes, and intrusted vigilance with the execution of them, men will still continue to "put evil for good, "and good for evil." Monsters of iniquity will creep from their dens to infest and annoy the public, although they cannot be dragged from thence to suffer as they deserve. Much wickedness must remain unpunished, and great misery must go unrelieved. Avarice and ambition will conceive and bring forth

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crimes, of which no earthly tribunal can take cognizance. Some sins will be too common, and some sinners too powerful, to be animadverted upon in this world. The prosperous villain will often die unmolested in his bed, and bequeath the fruits of his oppression to his heir; while injured innocence shall descend before him with sorrow to the grave, and quickly pass away out of remembrance. The cries of orphans will still ascend to heaven; the tears will still run down the widow's cheek; and the poor man will frequently find no helper upon earth. This the royal preacher and judge of Israel saw, who was so renowned through all the world for his wisdom and justice; he saw and mourned the impossibility of preventing it. "I considered," says he, "all the op-
"pressions that are done under the sun; and beheld
"the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had
"no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors
"there was power, but they had no comforter[a]."
The conclusion which king Solomon drew from what he saw of this kind under the sun, must be adopted by us likewise: "I said in mine heart, God shall
"judge the righteous and the wicked[b]." The interests of virtue and justice require that many causes should be heard, which cannot be brought to a trial here below; and therefore the day will surely come, when God shall erect a tribunal universal and scrutinizing as the light of heaven; where all those offences, which the best of magistrates taken from among men are necessitated to suffer and overlook,

[a] Eccles. iv. 1. [b] Eccles. iii. 17.



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shall be inquired into by himself. And when we behold this august assembly, our thoughts are naturally carried on to that great and awful process, the consideration of which will furnish the best rules for the conduct of all who are concerned in these earthly judicatories; from whence there lieth an appeal to the judgement-seat of Christ. There every cause must be re-heard, and finally determined, until virtue and vice shall be distinguished by the voice of God adjudging them to separate habitations for evermore. "He hath appointed a day, in which he will judge "the world in righteousness, by that man whom he "hath ordained."

The words direct us to employ our meditations on the appointment of a day for judgement; the person and appearance of the judge; and the judgement itself.

Man may abuse his liberty, and transgress the law of the great King; but the punishment will follow and overtake the offence, though not immediately; nor can we deduce any inference from its being deferred, but that God is merciful, and that the sinner should repent. The day of vengeance was fixed from the foundation of the world; but it was likewise then determined that another day should precede it, commensurate to the duration of this present system which may be called the day of man, when the earth is given into his hands, and he executes his will upon it. Now he may "rejoice, and let his heart cheer "him;" he may "walk in the ways of his heart, and "in the sight of his eyes;" he may devote his youth to pleasure, sacrifice his manhood to ambition, and

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wear out his old age in avarice. He may corrupt the innocent for the indulgence of the first, depopulate kingdoms for the gratification of the second, and impoverish thousands to satisfy the cravings of the last. But let him know, that, "for all these things "God will bring him into judgement," in that day which the Scriptures therefore style *his* day, "the "day of God," or "the day of the Lord." Then God shall speak, and man hear; then the viol and the harp shall no longer lull the effeminate in sensuality, nor the trumpet any more rouse the warrior to the battle; and then the thousands of gold and silver shall have lost all their charms in the eyes of the miser. In that day, the merry-hearted shall sigh, shame shall be the portion of pride, and covetousness shall inherit eternal poverty. Of these two days, the day of man and the day of God, which give so very different an aspect to the world and all that is therein, the sacred history holdeth forth to us many significant and instructive representations in the divine proceedings with regard to particular persons, cities, and kingdoms. These answer the same end with the solemn scene now before our eyes, being intended as preludes, or (if I may so speak) as *rehearsals* of the judgement to be finally executed upon the world of the ungodly. Thus, when the divine long suffering waited in the time of Noah; when the wicked vexed the soul of righteous Lot of Sodom; when Pharaoh oppressed the church in Egypt; when the ten tribes, revolting from the service of God and the house of David, became and continued schismatics, rebels, and idolaters; when Zedekiah

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threw the prophet Jeremiah into the dungeon, for declaring the will of Heaven; and when the Jews crucified Christ, and persecuted his apostles for the same reason; then was it, respectively in each case, the day of man. But it was the day of God, when the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the antediluvian generations swept away from the face of the earth; when the windows of heaven were opened, to rain fire and brimstone upon the cities of the plain; when Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore; when Salmanazar led Ephraim away into Assyria; when Nebuchadnezzar carried Judah captive to Babylon; and when the Roman armies overthrew Jerusalem, and set fire to the gates of Zion. But the united terrors of all these partial visitations will enable us to form only a faint idea of that great and terrible day, when God "shall judge "the world in righteousness, by that man whom he "hath ordained." Let us consider the person and appearance of him who shall then come to be our judge.

The text characterizes him by the words, "that "man whom he [God] hath ordained." The human nature of our Lord, ever intimately and indissolubly united to the divine, being, after his resurrection, taken up into heaven, was thereupon, in form, amidst the acclamations of angels and beatified spirits, invested with the glory and dominion of the Godhead, to be from thenceforth displayed and exercised in the government of his church, until the final act of his judgement shall close the amazing scene, and put a period to the mediatorial kingdom;

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which when the Son, the man Christ Jesus, shall have delivered up to the Father, then God, or the blessed Trinity, shall be all in all, reigning and ruling to eternity, as was the case from eternity, previous to the intervention of the Christian system. In the meantime, as the light which fills the circumference of heaven, penetrating to the utmost bounds of creation, and giving life and motion to all things that live and move, proceedeth forth from its central throne in the body of the sun; so the riches, and the wisdom, and the providence, and the power, and the majesty of the Deity, are dispensed to mankind, through the glorified humanity of the holy Jesus; to whom every creature in heaven and earth is therefore taught to ascribe blessing, and honour, and glory, and power. Thus hath it been done unto the man whom God delighteth to honour. And for this reason it is said, that "the Father judgeth no man, but "hath committed all judgement to the Son;" in exact conformity to what St. Paul asserteth in the text, that God shall judge the world in the person of his Son Christ Jesus; "he shall judge the world by "that man, whom," having united to himself, "he "hath ordained" and constituted head over all things for that purpose.

And by whom should God judge mankind, but by that man by whom he was first redeemed? "God "was in Christ reconciling the world to himself; "and God in Christ will reward every man accord-"ing to his works." He who took upon him the form of a servant, was crowned king of glory, and crowned for that reason. "Because he humbled

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" himself, and became obedient unto death, even the " death of the cross; therefore God highly exalted " him, and gave him a name which is above every " name;" therefore, by himself, he hath sworn, that to him, when sitting on the throne of judgement, " every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess, " that the man Christ Jesus is Lord, to the glory of " God the Father."

And can there then be a tongue, which doth not exult in the confession of the glorious and salutary truth? For surely had Heaven indulged us in the option of our judge, where could all our wishes have centred, but in a man like ourselves; our near kinsman, our brother as concerning the flesh; one who bore our sins, and carried our sorrows; one in all things tempted like as we are, and therefore touched with a feeling of our infirmities. In whose hands should we rather desire to see the law, than in his who, having himself fulfilled it for us, bestows on repentance what was only due to innocence? Whom can we behold with so much comfort on the judgement-seat, as the person who once stood at the bar, and suffered the execution of an unjust sentence, that we might escape the execution of a just one? And since we must needs be tried by unerring wisdom, impartial justice, and boundless power, what a reviving consideration is it, that they are under the direction of infinite and tenderest mercy? Abused and insulted mercy, indeed, will rule with a rod of iron, and no wrath can be so terrible as that of the Lamb: but the humble penitent, believing in Jesus as a Saviour, and obeying him as a Master, shall behold

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with joy the golden sceptre reached forth, in the day of his appearance as a judge.

The signs which are to precede that appearance, and, like so many heralds, to prepare the way for it, shall be eminently calculated for the purpose. Strange and portentous phænomena shall cause a fearful looking-for of judgement, while every part of the creation shall discover horrible symptoms of its approaching dissolution. The heavens, those most beautiful and glorious of the works of God, shall shrink at the prospect of the fire in which they are to melt; and the powers of the heavens, which sustain the world, shall be shaken, as the leaves of the wood are shaken by a mighty wind. The sun, that marvellous instrument, that fountain of light, that heart of the system, whence are the issues of life, and health, and joy, shall suddenly cease from shining, and by that means depriving the moon of her borrowed brightness, shall leave the astonished inhabitants of the world in darkness and the shadow of death. The stars, quitting their stations and courses and falling in wild disorder on each other, shall increase the horrors of the night spread over the world, an image of the darkness soon to receive the wicked for ever. The sea meanwhile will rise into vast mountains, and roll itself upon the shore, with the most tremendous and terrifying noise. All these things shall come upon the earth, at a time when it is filled with wars and rumours of wars; when there shall be sore distress of nations, visited with all the judgements of God, and become the scourges and destroyers of each other; when divine truth, like the

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sun, shall be obscured; when the church, as well as the moon, shall be turned into blood, through the abundance of persecutions; and when they, who, for the brightness of their doctrines and the purity of their lives, shone as the stars, through the prevalence of iniquity and temptation, shall fall away from their integrity, minding earthly things, and worldly interests. Consternation and perplexity unutterable shall seize and distract the hearts of men fainting for fear, and for expectation of the changes about to happen.

And now, the voice of that trumpet, which was once heard from the top of Sinai, shall again be heard from heaven; and the judge of all the earth shall make his entry with power and great glory, having in his retinue an innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of the righteous. Thus attended, he shall descend towards us, riding upon the clouds of heaven, and take his seat on the throne prepared for him. There he shall be seen, in the form and fashion of a man, exceeding glorious, clothed with the robes of majesty and honour, from whence we may suppose him opening his commission, in those words of his own; "All power is given unto me, in "heaven and in earth. The Father judgeth no man, "but hath committed all judgement unto the Son." The apostles are placed around him; the court is set; and all things are prepared for him to "judge "the world in righteousness." The nature and manner of this judgement call for our strictest attention.

Let us, therefore, transfer our thoughts from a

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temporary tribunal to the throne of eternal judgement. And here it must be considered that, as the whole world is become guilty before God, so we must all appear before the judgement-seat of Christ; not only they who shall be found alive at his coming, but they also who shall have been detained by death in the prisons of earth and sea. For, at the sound of the last trumpet, the prison door shall be opened, and all that are within shall come forth to judgement. "I saw the dead," saith the well-beloved John, "I "saw the dead, both small and great, stand before "God." All the senates that ever were convened, and all the assemblies that ever met upon business or pleasure; all the armies that were ever conducted into the field, and all the generals who conducted them; all the kings and princes who ever swayed a sceptre, and all the multitude of the nations that were ever in subjection to them; in a word, all the men and women that shall have lived, from the first pair to their last born son and daughter, are to appear together, and to take their respective trials at the day of the great assize. High and low, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, will then be distinguished only by their virtues and their vices; so that the whole world shall perceive and acknowledge that "God is no respecter of persons." The injured virgin, the afflicted widow, and the oppressed orphan, shall then see those, face to face, who have spoiled them of their innocence, their reputation, or their substance. There men shall meet all those who have seduced them, or whom they have seduced into the ways of sin; and all those who have directed and

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encouraged them, or whom they have directed and encouraged, to proceed in the paths of righteousness. From the former they shall turn away with shame and fear; the latter they shall behold with joy and rejoicing. There they shall view the wisdom of religion in the persons of the righteous, and wonder why they did not see it before, and give themselves up to the study of it; there they shall clearly behold the folly of irreligion in the persons of the wicked, and be astonished at their insensibility in following so hard after it. Amidst all this unimaginable multitude, there shall not be one idle and unconcerned spectator; not one that shall have leisure to trouble himself with the affairs of his neighbour. Every man will have a cause to be heard, and how will he be straightened until it be determined!

The prisoners, thus brought to the bar, are to be judged concerning the counsels of their hearts, the words of their lips, and the works of their hands, which will be found registered against them in the volumes of their consciences. These volumes, indeed, are often closed during the present life, by the hands of negligence and forgetfulness; but at the last day they shall be unfolded to all the world. These, perhaps, are the books, which, as Daniel and St. John inform us, shall be opened before the throne of Christ, that men may be judged out of those things which are written therein. The dust shall be wiped away from these important writings; each obliterated character shall be renewed and restored; and a light shining from above shall make them legible to every eye. There is nothing now hidden,

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which shall not then be known; nothing spoken or done in the secret chambers, which shall not be proclaimed in public. Conscience shall then do the work perfectly, which, through our own faults, it doth at present imperfectly; and we shall know, as we are known; we shall know ourselves as God knoweth us. But besides this, the great Accuser shall stand forth at the last day in his proper character, and aggravate with all his malice the sins to the commission of which he tempted the ungodly. "These wretches," may he say to the judge, "my "power never created, nor my providence sustained; "I never was incarnate, nor did I ever hang three "hours upon the cross for them; I gave them no "grace, and promised them no glory. Yet, by their "own choice, they have forsaken thee, who didst all "this for them, and voluntarily yielded themselves "servants to me. Mine therefore they are, and "with me shall be their portion." They who have beheld the countenance of a malefactor, when suddenly confronted by an accomplice appearing as an evidence against him, may form some idea of that confusion which shall overwhelm the sinner, when conscience, awaking out of sleep, shall witness his iniquity to his face; when the very thoughts of his heart shall be made manifest, and the tempter shall be his accuser.

Nor shall the faithful escape the malice of him who is styled the accuser of the brethren; but he shall accuse them also before their God; alleging against them the follies of their youth, and the infirmities of

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their old age; their fruitless repentances, and frequent relapses; their excesses in the pleasures of sense, and their deficiencies in the duties of religion; the wanderings of their prayers, and the coldness of their charity. And, alas! if God should be extreme to mark what is done amiss, who could stand? But for those who believe, upon the preaching of the Gospel, who lay hold on the benefits of that act of grace, and come in upon the easy terms of the Christian covenant, for them there is Παρακλητος, an *advocate* ready to appear, even the Spirit, which now "maketh intercession for them," and shall do the same at the last day against the allegations of Satan, pleading the merits of the Redeemer, and the promised pardon made effectual by grace; what he wrought *for* his people, and what he wrought *in* them; the groans and the tears of the penitent, the fastings and the watchings, the prayers and the alms of the faithful; the weakness and imperfection of which shall be forgiven, and they shall be accepted, not for their own sake, but for the sake of the beloved; through whose blood all shall be saved who depart in the faith and fear of God, notwithstanding their relapses, through infirmity, in the days of their flesh. These, therefore, go to the portion on the right hand, because the Lord their God doth answer for them. They shall hear the joyful sound of pardon and peace: the angels who ministered to them, and often rejoiced at their repentance, shall place them in everlasting habitations of pleasure and glory; while the wicked, forsaken by their guardians, and con-

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demned by the righteous judgement of their God, are consigned over to the executioners of eternal vengeance.

A consideration of these important truths suggesteth the best rules for the conduct of those who are concerned in human judicatories.

Mindful, therefore, of "that man by whom "God shall judge the world in righteousness," he who sitteth on the seat of judgement, as the representative of an earthly sovereign, will consider himself likewise as *his* minister, "by whom kings "reign, and princes decree judgement," and at whose bar kings and princes, with all in authority under them, must one day appear. At present "God "standeth in the congregation of princes," observing the manner in which they exercise the power delegated to them; but hereafter he shall *sit* as a *judge* even of them, who, by reason of that delegated power are styled *gods*. The care then of the magistrate, when he goeth up to the judgement-seat, will be, to put on righteousness as a glorious and beautiful robe; and to render his tribunal a fit emblem of that eternal throne, of which justice and judgement are the habitation.

Mindful of those holy and exalted personages, who shall sit with their Lord upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, they to whom the laws of their country commit the lives and properties of their fellow subjects, will not suffer themselves to be biassed by any worldly considerations. They will neither be intimidated by the frowns of the mighty, nor seduced by the promises of the opulent, to de-

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part one step from the disinterested uprightness and integrity which characterize the apostles of the Son of God.

Mindful of that true and faithful witness which every man carries in his bosom, which no gift can blind, no power can silence, or prevent its appearing to testify concerning his thoughts, his words, and his actions at the last day, they who are called upon to give evidence, will do it with simplicity and sincerity; neither palliating the crimes of the guilty, nor aggravating the calamities of the wretched, but so speaking "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing "but the truth," as their consciences will hereafter infallibly do, and as they expect help from the God of their salvation in that dreadful hour.

Mindful of that blessed and gracious Spirit, who now "maketh intercession for us with unutterable "groanings," and who shall plead our cause at the judgement-seat of Christ, the advocate will rejoice in the godlike task of patronizing the injured and oppressed; of contributing, by his skill and industry, towards the elucidation of truth, the detection of villany, and the vindication of innocence. But he will never employ his learning for the establishment of falsehood, nor display his eloquence in favour of injustice.

Mindful of their happy lot whom mercy shall receive to glory, and of their sad estate whom justice shall hurry away to torments, we shall all provide against that day which is to determine our fate for everlasting ages. Should a door of hope be opened to those unhappy wretches who are now reserved in

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chains, to be brought forth to judgement before an earthly judge, how eagerly would they press into it? Could sorrow for their past offences, and unfeigned resolutions of amendment, procure the royal pardon, restore them to a state of probation, and enable them to lay hold on life, how thankful would they be for the offer, how readily would they close with the proposal! This favour is graciously vouchsafed to us. For, "behold, now is the accepted time; behold, "now is the day of salvation. The judge standeth "before the door," but his entrance is not yet. The evangelical act of grace continueth in full force, and all are invited to partake of the benefits of it; that so having repented, and believed the Gospel, having kept the faith in a pure conscience, and kept it unto the end, they may obtain their pardon under the seal of the living God, and receive the promised reward in the day of eternal recompense. For "there is no "condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." While, therefore, we bless God, who preserveth to us the administration of justice in our land, let the present solemnity, by reminding us of the trial we likewise must undergo, be made profitable in things pertaining not only to this life, but also to that which is to come; that so, when we shall all meet again, after our separation by the chances of life and the stroke of death, we may remember that we met on this day; and remember with pleasure, that we met not in vain.



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# DISCOURSE XXIV.

## THE ORIGIN OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

ROMANS, XIII. 4.

*He is the minister of God to thee for good.*

It is impossible for any one to consider, with attention, the harmony in which all the parts of the natural world conspire to act for the benefit of the whole, without feeling an ardent desire to learn by whom, and in what manner, they were first framed and compacted together; how the agents were suited to the patients, and the causes proportioned to the effects; so that the former have ever since operated invariably in the production of the latter; and the result hath been an uniform obedience to the laws originally imposed upon inanimate matter.

A diligent survey of the blessings for which the moral world is indebted to civil polity, and the due execution of its edicts, must needs excite a curiosity equally earnest and equally laudable, to inquire into the origin of so useful and necessary an institution; to know at what time, and under whose direction, a

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machine was constructed, capable, by a variety of well-adjusted springs and movements, of controlling the irregularities of depraved nature, and of ensuring to us, amidst the restless and contradictory passions and affections of sinful men, a quiet possession of our lives and properties.

A "state of nature" hath been supposed by writers of eminence upon this subject, "when men lived "in a wild and disorderly manner; and, though "they had a principle of restraint from religion, and "a kind of general law that exacted punishment of "evil-doers, yet as the administration of this law was "in common hands, and they had no one arbiter or "judge, with authority over the rest, to put this law, "with any regularity, in execution; so, from the ex-"cess of self-love, many mutual violences and wrongs "would ensue, which would put men upon forming "themselves into civil societies, under some common "arbiter, for remedy of this disorder."—And it hath been, accordingly, concluded, that "the civil magi-"strate was called in as an ally to religion, to turn "the balance, which had too much inclined to the "side of that inordinate self-love."

In the "wild and disorderly state" here supposed, when mankind were mere savages, it is not easy to conceive how they had obtained "a principle of re-"straint from religion," or "a kind of general law "that exacted punishment of evil-doers." And it is no less difficult to imagine, what benefit could accrue to them from either; since, as the religion had no priest to teach and enforce it, the law had no magistrate to promulgate and to execute it. "The ad-



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"ministration of this law was in *common hands*," that is, in the hands of every man, who had his own law, canon as well as statute, suited to his present occasion, convenience, or caprice. And what was this, but to be truly and properly destitute both of law and religion?

As this independent state of nature was a state of perfect liberty; and as they, who had the happiness to live under so pure and primitive a dispensation, were, doubtless, too sensible of their happiness to exchange it readily for government, always liable to degenerate into tyranny and oppression, it is obvious to think, that when the project for "calling in the "civil magistrate as an ally to religion" was first proposed, it would not fail to meet with a very vigorous opposition. "An inordinate self-love," we find, was in possession; and no possessor is with more difficulty ejected. Of the privilege enjoyed by every man, to do without control what was "right in his "own eyes," every man would be exceedingly tenacious; and no one who thought himself, by his superior strength of body or intellect, better entitled to an ox or an ass than his neighbour, could be presently made to see the propriety of his suffering for the good of the community.

"The free consent of every individual," we are told, "is necessary to be obtained for the institution "of civil government." But upon what plan shall the universal assembly be convened? Or who, in a state of nature, hath authority to convene it? How shall the proceedings of this tumultuous congress of independents be regulated, or the votes of its mem-

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bers be collected? And when will all agree to invest some with a power of inflicting pains and penalties, which others cannot but be sensible they shall soon incur?

It is by no means reasonable to imagine, that each person would consent from thenceforth to be determined by a majority of the whole body, which might chance, upon questions of the utmost importance, to exceed the minority only by a single vote. And that one half of the society should thus domineer over the other half, would be deemed an infringement on liberty, to which men, born free and equal, might, with great appearance of reason, scruple to subject themselves.

It is indeed sometimes asserted, that "no man "can submit himself to the absolute will of an- "other:" in which case he cannot submit himself to any government whatsoever; since the *legislature*, in every government, is absolute, having a power to repeal or dispense with its own laws, upon occasions of which itself is judge.

The reason assigned for the above assertion, "that "no man can submit himself to the absolute will of "another," is this, that "no man can give that of "which himself is not possessed, namely, the power "over his own life." But how then came any government to be invested with the power of life and death? And what would a government avail which was not invested with that power? If laws inflicting capital punishments are frequently broken, in what a state would the world be, if there were no such laws? Here, then is a *dignus vindice nodus;* and

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therefore, Deus *intersit!* For, without the interposition of some power superior to human, a system of civil polity calculated to answer, in any degree, the end of its institution, can neither be framed nor supported.

And the truth is, when we reflect a little farther upon the subject, we cannot but perceive our apprehensions greatly shocked at the supposition, that the wise and good Creator, who formed mankind for society in this world, and designed to train them, by a performance of its duties, for a more noble and exalted fellowship with angels in the world to come, should place them, at the beginning, in the above-mentioned wild and disorderly state of independence, to roam in fields and forests, like the brutes that perish, and to search for law and government where they were not to be found; that he should give them no rulers, by whom or how they should be guided and directed, but leave them to choose for themselves, that is, to dispute and fight, and, in the end, to be governed by the strongest. One cannot think of multitudes in such a state of equality, with fierce and savage tempers and dispositions, prepared to contend for superiority, but it brings to mind that army, which, according to a pagan fiction, from the teeth of serpents sown in the earth, sprang up together, ready armed for battle, and destroyed each other.

But are these things so? Did God indeed, at the beginning, bring into being, at the same time, a number of human creatures independent of each other, and turn them uninstructed into the woods, to settle a civil polity by compact among themselves? We

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know he did not. He who "worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will," or that law which his wisdom prescribes to his power; he who appointed a regular subordination among the celestial hierarchies; he who "made a law for the rain, and "gave his decree to the sea, that the waters should "not pass his commandment;" he who is the God of peace and order, provided for the establishment and continuation of these blessings among mankind, by ordaining, first in the case of Adam, and then again in that of Noah, that the human race should spring from one common parent.

Unless, therefore, some other origination of mankind be discovered, all equality and independence are at an end. The state of nature was a state of subordination; since, from the beginning some were born subject to others; and the power of the father, by whatever name it be called, must have been supreme at the first, when there was none superior to it. "To fathers within their private families," saith the judicious Hooker, "nature hath given a supreme "power; for which cause we see throughout the "world, even from the foundation thereof, all men "have ever been taken as lords and lawful kings, in "their own houses." And had children the power to choose for themselves, what could they wish for beyond the care and protection of a parent?

The creation of one pair, the institution of marriage, and the relations flowing from it, do so evidently show subordination at the beginning to have been natural, and not founded on compact between peers, that two of the ablest advocates for a different

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hypothesis have, in fact, reduced the supposed compact at last to a *probable* or *tacit* consent of the children to be governed by their father. So that we may fairly look upon this point to be given up. Let us, therefore, go on to trace, as well as we can, the progress of society in the early ages of the world; to point out the manner in which a number of families became united under one civil polity, and governments arose, differing from each other no less in form than in extent.

As mankind multiplied, they necessarily found themselves obliged to separate and disperse; which they did accordingly, under their natural rulers, the chiefs of families and tribes, who, by reason of their longevity, saw themselves, in a course of years, at the head of a numerous train of descendants and dependents. By these means the earth became gradually filled with *little* governments; and as there was land sufficient for them all, in this state they continued, till, through the workings of corrupted nature, disputes were engendered, which terminating in war, victory at last declared for one of the parties, and the other was obliged to submit. Thus the *larger* governments arose by conquest, first swallowed up the *lesser* into themselves, and then contended with and overthrew each other.

In the tenth chapter of Genesis, we have an account of the families, tribes, or lesser governments, with which the earth was overspread by the progeny of the sons of Noah. And in the same chapter we read, that, very soon after, by means of Nimrod, a *mighty one*, a warrior, a conqueror, the kingdom, or

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larger government, of Babel began to rear its head, which, in process of time, under different names, became universal; till, grown too great to support its own weight, it was subverted by the Persian, as the Persian was by the Grecian, and the Grecian by the Roman; out of which last were formed the empires, kingdoms, and states, at this day subsisting.

Thus it was, that the lesser governments were, from the beginning, founded in the *patria potestas*, and "multiplied as long as there was room enough, "or they could agree together; till, upon dissensions "arising, the stronger or more fortunate swallowed "up the weaker: and those great ones, again break-"ing in pieces dissolved into lesser dominions[a]." Power dropped from the hands of one, but was always seized by another before it could descend to the people, who indeed often changed their governors, but were never left to rove at large without any government at all. Compact had no place, unless either when the lesser states united, as the Greeks did under Agamemnon, against a common enemy, which was only for a time; or else, when several states united to go and seek fresh settlements, they chose a head, with reserve of privileges to the leaders under him. As to those illegitimate forms of government called *aristocratic* and *democratic*, they are comparatively of late standing, and were indeed founded on compact, though generally among peers in rebellion, who having broken off from their alle-

[a] Mr. Locke.

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giance to their natural rulers, and thrown the public into convulsions, and, being determined to admit no common superior, were obliged, by the necessity of their circumstances, to settle themselves by compact into a government, in which a certain mock equality of all was pretended, but a conjunct tyranny of a few was exercised. Orators, haranguing upon liberty to get themselves a name among the populace, have extolled these forms, as the most accomplished and genuine of all. But if we consider, as an acute writer directs us to do, that, "the utmost energy of the "nervous style of Thucydides, and the great copiousness and expression of the Greek language, seem "to sink under the historian, when he attempts to "describe the disorders which arose from faction, "throughout all the Grecian commonwealths;" that "Appian's history of the Roman civil wars contains "the most frightful picture of massacres, proscriptions, and forfeitures, that ever was presented to "the world[b];" if, at the same time, we recollect the confusion and desolation once occasioned in our own country, by the project of erecting a government upon the plan of those famous democracies; we shall find no temptation to exchange a regular and well constituted monarchy for a REPUBLIC, especially as we must be first thrown into that imaginary political chaos, falsely called a state of nature, before the fair creation can emerge. Like the Israelites of old, we must break off all that is precious and valuable and

[b] Mr. HUME.

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cast it into the fire, that from thence may come out this boasted idol, at the feet of which kings and kingdoms are to fall down and worship.

But, if the foregoing be a true representation of facts, it may be asked, How came men into that savage state in which many nations have been, and are at present, and which, if it be not a state of nature, yet doth much resemble that which is described as such, and gave birth to the ideas that have been entertained concerning it, and the political systems erected upon the supposition of it?

In order satisfactorily to answer this question, it must be remembered, that after the confusion at Babel, and the apostasy of the nations from the worship of the true God to idolatry, the world was gradually peopled by colonies sent forth from places overstocked. These colonies would consist of a mixture of people, often the meanest and lowest, sometimes driven out by conquering enemies, destitute of necessaries, to seek for settlements in distant quarters of the globe. If they fixed in a colder latitude, which rendered the want of clothes and a variety of well prepared food more sensibly felt, and likewise in a place conveniently situated for traffic, they would employ all the understanding of which they were masters to contrive things, first for use, and afterwards for elegance and ornament. But as this was a work of ages; as some imperfect notices of their ruder times would be handed down to their more polite ones; and as they had no writing to record events; there must needs be a wide chasm in their history, between the desertion of their old settlements, and

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the completion of their new ones. So that when, in their civilized and polished state, they came, at their leisure, to look back, and guess at their own rise and progress, they would be lost in the darkness of those times which preceded their present improvements. They would then imagine a state of nature, in which all were savages, and all were equal; they would fancy themselves to have been Αυτοχθονες, judge of other nations by their own, make the system universal, and suppose all government to have been founded on compact among peers in that "wild and "disorderly state." As their laws, though of late date, were the first *written* accounts of their civilization, they would conclude that, till then, there had been no law or civil polity in the world; though, in every country, there is a *jus scriptum* and a *jus non scriptum*, of which the latter is always the oldest, being coeval with the constitution, or even prior to it, having sometimes been brought from the place whence the colony came, and perhaps delivered down from the beginning.

In circumstances like these, we are not to be surprised, if we find the historians, philosophers, and poets, among the Greeks and Romans, believing civil government to have arisen at first by an agreement among independent savages; as some of them imagined that the world itself was formed by a fortuitous concourse of independent atoms, floating up and down in an infinite void. In constructing these visionary systems, political and physical, they displayed their ingenuity; and we can only lament their want of information with regard to what had happen-

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ed in former ages, of which they had no means of obtaining more than was derived to them by an imperfect, disjointed tradition, disguised in the dress of fable, and destitute of any authority to recommend and gain it credit. They erected the best fabric they could with the materials in their hands; and it would be unreasonable to expect brick from artificers to whom straw was not given. But in us, who have the Scripture history before us, it would be something worse than unreasonable, to overlook the information with which that supplies us, and have recourse to romantic schemes which owed their being to the want of it.

On the other hand, let us suppose a colony, upon its migration, to have settled itself in a warmer climate, where men would find little or no occasion for clothes, houses, or the preparation of food by fire; and where they were cut off from all communication with the rest of the world. In this situation, they would not concern themselves about the conveniences, much less the elegances of life. Naked, or nearly so, living upon the fruits of the earth, and such other provision as the chase, or the net would procure, and strangers, for want of commerce, to arts and learning they must continue in the deepest intellectual poverty, retaining only some of those superstitious customs and diabolical rites derived from their idolatrous ancestors, and imported with them. And thus degenerating, as they must of necessity do, every day more and more, they would come at last into that deplorable state of ignorance and barbarism in which some nations are indeed found at this day.

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But is this a state of *nature?* Was this the state in which the Lord of all things placed the noblest of sublunary beings, the heir of glory and immortality, when his own hands had formed and fashioned him, and he had breathed into him the breath of life? No, surely, it is a state the most *unnatural* in which rational creatures, made in the image of their Creator, can be conceived to exist; a state into which, through apostasy from revealed truth, and consequent loss of all knowledge, by the just judgement of God upon them, some nations were permitted to fall, and are suffered to continue, *in terrorem* to others. And does a master of reason, an enlightened philosopher in an enlightened age, send us to learn the first principles of government from Floridians, Brasilians, and Cherokees, because it is said that they have no kings, but choose leaders as they want them in time of war? Though such is the force of primeval institution, such the necessity of government, and such the voice of nature concerning it, that even in America. upon its discovery, some nations, as the Mexicans and Peruvians, were found in the state of the *larger* governments, which arose by conquest, while others, in the form of the *lesser*, were subject to the chiefs of their respective clans and tribes. Savages themselves cannot live in a state of absolute equality and independence. In civilized communities, a ship cannot be navigated, a regiment cannot march, a family cannot be holden together, without a subordination established and preserved. And was all government once dissolved, and the world really reduced to that state out of which civil polity is sup-

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posed to have originally sprung, it would be a scene of uproar and confusion, and a field of blood, till the day of the consummation of all things.

A long and uninterrupted enjoyment of blessings, is apt to extinguish in us that gratitude towards the author of them which it ought to cherish and invigorate; and justice is the less regarded, when she maketh these her awful processions through the land, preserving peace and tranquillity in our borders, because she maketh them periodically and constantly. Far different would be our sensations at such times, had sad experience ever taught us what it was to see government unhinged, to want the protection of regal power, and the due execution of laws by those to whom that power is delegated, "for the punishment "of evil-doers, and the praise of them that do well." The course of nature often glides on unobserved, when there are no variations in it; and the sun himself shineth unnoticed, because he shineth every day. "Since the time that God did first proclaim the edicts "of his law," says the the excellent Hooker, "heaven "and earth have hearkened unto his voice, and their "labour hath been to do his will. But if nature "should intermit her course, and leave altogether, "though it were but for a while, the observation of "her own laws; if those principal and mother ele-"ments, whereof all things in this lower world are "made, should lose the qualities which now they "have; if the frame of that heavenly arch, erected "over our heads, should loosen and dissolve itself; "if celestial spheres should forget their wonted mo-"tions, and, by irregular volubility, turn themselves

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"any way, as it might happen; if the prince of the "lights of heaven, which now, as a giant, doth run "his unwearied course, should, as it were, through "a languishing faintness, begin to stand, and to rest "himself; if the moon should wander from her "beaten way, the times and seasons of the year "blend themselves by disordered and confused mix-"ture, the winds breathe out their last gasp, the "clouds yield no rain, the earth be defeated of hea-"venly influence, and her fruits pine away, as child-"ren at the withered breasts of their mother, no "longer able to yield them relief; what would be-"come of man himself, whom these things do all "now serve?" and how would he look back upon those benefits, for which, when they were daily poured upon him in boundless profusion, he forgot to be thankful?

While, therefore, we partake, in so eminent a degree, the benefits of civil polity, let us not be unmindful of our great Benefactor. Let these solemn occasions serve to remind us, that there is an intimate connexion between religion and government; that the latter flowed originally from the same divine source with the former, and was, at the beginning, the ordinance of the Most High; that the state of nature was a state of subordination, not one of equality and independence, in which mankind never did, nor ever can exist; that the civil magistrate is "the "minister of God to us for good;" and that to the gracious Author of every other valuable gift we are indebted for all the comforts and conveniences of society, during our passage through this turbulent

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scene, to those mansions, where, as violence is no more committed, punishment is no more deserved; where eternal Justice hath fixed her throne, and is for ever employed in distributing rewards to her subjects who have been tried and found faithful.



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# DISCOURSE XXV.

## THE PRODIGAL SON.

LUKE, XV. 32.

*It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.*

THESE words conclude the parable of the Prodigal Son; a parable, for its variety of incidents, and the affecting manner in which they are related, remarkably beautiful, even in the letter of it. A younger son, gay and thoughtless, as youth often is, grown weary of being in the house and under the direction of a kind and tender father, desires to have his fortune consigned over to him, that he may go out into the world, and manage for himself. Having obtained his request, he immediately makes use of the so much wished for liberty and independency, quits the habitation of his father, and takes his journey into a far country. Here, falling into bad company and strong temptations, he found his good resolutions presently staggered; and his old principles not being firmly fixed, and having no support, soon gave way to a set of new ones, better adapted to the times, and the fashion of the country he was now in. Loose practices were the necessary consequences of

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false principles; and, as the paths of sin are not only slippery, but all upon the descent too, he fell from one wickedness to another, plunged into all manner of riot and debauchery, and spent the last farthing. To complete his misery, there arose at that time a mighty famine in the land where he was; and he was soon at a loss where to get a piece of bread. Nay, to so great an extremity was he driven by the violence of the famine, that, having been forced to submit to the very abject employment of feeding swine, he tried in vain to satisfy the cravings of nature with the dry and empty husks that the swine did eat. These had nothing in them fit to nourish the human body. Hungry and thirsty, his soul fainted in him, and there was no man that took any thought or care about him. The affliction was sharp, but the case required it; and now it began to work the intended cure. For by this time the sense of his misery, had, through God's grace, brought him to a sense of his folly, from which that misery flowed; and when he was starving at night in the fields with cold and hunger, he could not help thinking of the happy souls he had left behind him in his father's house, where there was joy, and comfort, and plenty of every thing. In that house he was once a beloved son. But his wickedness had been too great to suffer him to hope he should ever be owned there again in that capacity. Tribulation is the school of humility, and an excellent school it is: for by it the man whose pride and gaiety of heart were such, that he could not bear to stay in the house where he was a son, became so very meek and submissive, that to be in that same house as an hired



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servant was now the utmost of his wishes. Nay, he hardly could bring himself to hope that his father would take him in again even as a servant. In fear and trembling, therefore, he arose, and returned to him, whose face he was yet afraid, though so desirous, to see. But, lo, the bowels of the good old man yearned after his lost child, and he was continually looking out for him; so that at his return, he saw him while he was yet a great way off; and, with a heart overflowing with love and joy, ran forth to meet him, embraced him in his arms, fell upon his neck, and kissed him. He would hardly stay to hear his humiliation of himself, and confession of his unworthiness, but ordered the servants instantly to produce the best robe, and put it upon him, and to put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet, and to bring forth the fatted calf and kill it, that they might eat and be merry. All this was accordingly done; and now there was nothing to be heard but music and melody, and the voice of joy and thankfulness, in that house. But the elder brother, who had lived with the father, and happened at this time to be abroad in the field about his business, coming home, and drawing near to the house, was surprised with the noise of music and dancing; and calling one of the servants out, he asked what it meant. The servant told him, that his long lost brother was come home again, and that his father had killed the fatted calf, because he had received him safe and sound. Upon this, instead of participating in the common joy, he suffered pride and envy to get possession of his heart; he was angry, and would not go in. Therefore came his father out

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and entreated him; to whom he complained, that having served him so long, without transgressing at any time his commandments, he never had so much as a kid given him, that he might make merry with his friends; but as soon as this other son was come, who had devoured his living with harlots, the fatted calf had been killed for him. "Son," says the good old man to him, "thou art ever with me, and all that "I have is thine," so that thou mayst have a feast at any time, or rather, indeed, hast a continual feast; but, surely, upon such an extraodinary occasion as this, "it was meet that we should make merry, and be "glad; for this thy brother was dead, and is alive "again; and was lost, and is found."

Such is the parable of the Prodigal Son, according to the letter. Let us now endeavour to discover the spirit and interpretation of this beautiful parable.

"A certain man had two sons." This father is God himself, the Father of both Jew and Gentile, represented here, as in many other places, under the figure of two sons. The Jew is considered in Scripture as the elder; the Gentile as the younger. For thus the rejection of the Jew and the acceptance of the Gentile, were showed forth by the rejection of Cain and the acceptance of Abel, the rejection of Ishmael and the acceptance of Isaac, the rejection of Esau and the acceptance of Jacob. These two sons, Jew and Gentile, at the beginning lived together in their Father's house, that is, the church, which, as says St. Paul, is "the house of the living "God." There, under their Father's immediate protection, they partook alike of the divine promises and

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sacred services, and had all things common; and there was, for some time, no difference between them.

"But the younger son said unto his father, Father, "give me the portion of goods that falleth to me; "and he divided unto them his living. And not "many days after, he gathered all together, and took "his journey into a far country, and spent his sub-"stance with riotous living." In these words is described the departure of the Gentiles from God, who having conferred his divine promises, and in them the riches of the kingdom of heaven, on all alike, is said to have "divided his living between his two sons." The elder, the Jew, continued with him in the church. This we know by the history of Abraham and his posterity, till the coming of Christ. But the younger, the Gentile, growing weary of the service of God, and fond of independency, and the liberty of making his own religion, gathered together all the talents and abilities bestowed upon him, with the knowledge he had acquired from the divine revelations and institutions, "and took his journey into a far country;" in other words, he went out from the presence of God in his church, and in his heart departed far from the Lord. Whence we often find the Gentiles spoken of under the phrase, "Those that are AFAR OFF." Thus this poor silly prodigal became, as St. Paul styles him, "an alien from the commonwealth of "Israel, a stranger from the covenants of promise; "having no hope, and without God in the world." The promises and services carried off by him were applied to false objects; and he soon "wasted his

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"substance," the riches of his understanding, "in "riotous living," and devoured his estate, the means by which his spirit was to be supported, with harlots; in a word, he fell into idolatry, which not only is itself spiritual fornication, but opened a door to all manner of lasciviousness, by introducing it even into the temples and services of the gods. For which reason St. Paul closely connects them in his account of this very transaction, the apostasy of the nations, Rom. i. "They changed the glory of the incorrup-"tible God into an image—WHEREFORE God also "gave them up to uncleanness." But let us proceed to consider the consequences of this behaviour.

"And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty "famine in that land, and he began to be in want."

Having forsaken God, and lost his grace and love, and at length all knowledge of him, he could find nothing elsewhere but that poverty, misery, and want, which the fall had brought upon the earth. This wretched state of the Gentile world is pictured to us by the lively and striking idea of a famine. "There "arose a mighty famine in that land," a mighty dearth and scarcity of divine knowledge, which is the bread of life to the soul; for "man doth not live "by bread alone, but by the word that proceedeth "out of the mouth of God." A famine of this sort is thus described by the prophet Amos: "Behold, the "days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a "famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a "thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the "Lord: and they shall wander from sea to sea, and "from the north even to east; they shall run to and

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"fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not "find it." This was exactly the case of the Gentiles, when they had squandered away the riches of divine knowledge which they had received from their heavenly Father at the beginning. Then there arose a sad famine of the word of God; and they began to be in want of something that would satisfy the empty soul. Then their philosophers and seekers after wisdom ran to and fro from one end of the earth to the other, to procure a little true religious knowledge; but it was not to be found. And the famine was over all the face of the Gentile world, and the land fainted by reason of the famine. But as there was no true bread of life to be procured, the soul must endeavour to satisfy itself with something. Accordingly, we read of our young prodigal, that,

"He went and joined himself to a citizen of that "country, and he sent him into his fields to feed "swine. And he would fain have filled his belly "with the husks which the swine did eat; and no "man gave unto him."

"No man," says Christ, "can serve two masters." But one he must serve. And if he quits the service of God, he soon becomes a slave to the devil. This was the case of the Gentile prodigal. When he had deserted the service of his heavenly Father, God Almighty, the next thing we hear of him is, that he had joined himself to another master; namely, to him who, since he has been cast out of heaven, walks up and down in the earth, seeking those who have left their old Master and Father, to hire them into his service. The prodigal was in that condition; and

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accordingly Satan took possession of him. For thus St. Paul tells the Ephesians, that before their conversion "they walked according to the prince of the "power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the "children of disobedience." And the design of the Gospel is elsewhere said to be, to "turn the Gen-"tiles from the power of Satan to God." While they were Gentiles, therefore, they were under "the "power of Satan." Now the employment which the grand adversary of man's happiness finds for him, when once engaged in his service, is this. He sends him into proper scenes of sin and wickedness, vanity and folly, there to gratify the desires of corrupt nature, enslaving him by this means to his own brutish lusts and passions. This is most exactly described in the parable, by the circumstances of his being "sent into his master's fields to feed swine;" to which ravenous and unclean animals, the insatiable, earthly lusts of concupiscence are, with great propriety, resembled in holy Scripture. The misery of the employment is, that these lusts are never to be satisfied; a truth to which the heart of every sinner will bear a sad testimony. Besides, God made the soul of man for himself, and therefore bequeathed it unquietness till possessed of its Maker. Vain then is the employment of those who seek to procure the happiness of the soul, by indulging the appetites of the body. Men are daily inventing new schemes to effect it; till diversion is grown a science, and amusement become a toil. But if we ask them, they will one and all tell us, it is not yet effected. Something, to a man possessed of all that earth can

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give him—something is still wanting. O fools and slow of heart to believe what the prophets and apostles have spoken! The comforts of religion are wanting, and these they will not look after; but still, copying the example of their ancestor, the poor Gentile prodigal, they would "fain fill their bellies "with the husks which the swine do eat:" they are endeavouring to nourish their immortal spirits with the empty unsatisfying things of this corruptible world, which are calculated for the bodily appetites only. But let all who have followed this prodigal in his departure from his father, come hither, and hearken, and he will tell them what God hath done for his soul, and call them to follow the noble example he has set them in his return and reconciliation.

And here let us observe with attention a complete description of the process of true repentance and justification in the Gentiles, and all who are sinners like them. The violence of the famine had brought the wretched prodigal to the last stage of distress. He had tried in vain to satisfy himself with "that which "was not bread. Hungry and thirsty his soul faint-"ed in him; and he drew near to the gates of death." But now the grace of God, which leadeth to repentance, began to work upon him. It hath been ready to do so all along; but as it is said of Christ, that he "could do no mighty works in some places, be-"cause of men's unbelief," so his grace does not work upon men's minds when they are determined not to suffer it. While the prodigal's heart was in the flutter, and hurry, and dissipation of pleasure and extravagance, no mighty works of salvation could

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be wrought in it. But when it was humbled by affliction, and broken with continual tribulation, it became a proper subject for the operations of divine grace. Accordingly, the good Spirit of God immediately began with his preventing favour, and led him step by step, till his repentance and reconciliation were completed.

"And when he came to himself, he said, "How "many hired servants of my father have bread "enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! "I will arise, and go to my father, and will say unto "him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and be-"fore thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy "son; make me as one of thy hired servants."

A sense of sin is the beginning of repentance; and a sense of misery begets a sense of sin. The Gentiles (and the case is the same with sinners of all ages) could not but feel the poverty and wretchedness into which they had fallen. And when a man feels himself miserable, it is but natural for him to consider how he came to be so. The cause appeared plain enough to the Gentile, when enlightened at first by the Scriptures of the Old Testament dispersed in the Septuagint version, and then by the Gospel preached through all nations. Aided in his meditations by these helps, he quickly traced all his misfortunes up to the fountain head, which was his leaving the church, the house of the living God, his heavenly Father. Now he began thoroughly to comprehend the miseries of his state, and to envy the happiness of those who had continued in their Father's house, and served him day and night in his

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temple. They were not confounded in the perilous time; and in the days of dearth they had enough and to spare. They feasted evermore at the table of their heavenly Father, and found the light of his countenance to be life, and his favour and grace as a cloud of the latter rain; while *his* soul was starving for lack of knowledge and truth, and frozen for want of charity. "How many hired servants of my "father have bread enough and to spare, and I pe-"rish with hunger!" He was now, as it is finely expressed, "come to himself," and to a remembrance of his true condition and interest. From the hour he left his father's house to this moment, he had been in a dream; and found himself just awaked out of what may be called a deep sleep, in the language of St. Paul, who thus addresses a sinner, "Awake, "thou that sleepest, and arise." Accordingly, being now awake, he determined instantly to *arise*, and tread back the steps by which he had departed from his father; to make a frank and full confession to him of his past sins; to acknowledge himself utterly unworthy of any favour at his hands; and to declare his readiness to submit to any penance, to live in any state of humiliation, that his father should be pleased to impose; only begging, at any rate, to be admitted into the church to serve him again. This resolution he had no sooner formed, than he made haste, and prolonged not the time to put it in practice. He arose, returned to his father, and said unto him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and "before thee, and am no more worthy to be called "thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants."

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Which words, as put in the mouth of the prodigal Gentile, returning at the preaching of the Gospel to the church of God, the house of his heavenly Father, may, it is apprehended, be thus paraphrased —" Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, " Maker of all things, Judge of all men; I acknow- " ledge and bewail my manifold sins and wickedness, " which I from time to time," from the first hour of my departure, " most grievously have committed, by " thought, word, and deed, against thy divine Ma- " jesty, provoking most justly thy wrath and indig- " nation against me. I do earnestly repent, and am " heartily sorry for these my misdoings: the remem- " brance of them is grievous unto me; the burden of " them is intolerable. Have mercy upon me, have " mercy upon me, most merciful Father. For thy " Son my Lord Jesus Christ's sake forgive me what " is past, and grant that I may ever hereafter serve " and please thee in newness of life, to the honour " and glory of thy name, through Jesus Christ our " Lord." This is the confession which the church enjoins us, poor prodigal sinners of the Gentiles, to make, as often as we return from feeding upon *husks* in the world, to eat the bread of life in our *Father's house.* And a noble comment it is upon the short but full confession of the prodigal in the parable. Let us now hear what was the reception this returning penitent met with, and consequently, what reception we shall meet with, when we return like him.

" But while he was yet a great way off, his father " saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on

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"his neck, and kissed him;" and while he was confessing his sinfulness and unworthiness, "he said to "the servants, Bring forth the best robe and put it "on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on "his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, "and let us eat and be merry. For this my son was "dead, and is alive again; was lost, and is found. "And they began to be merry."

Here let all sinners (and sinners we all are) behold the loving kindness of our heavenly Father to those who truly repent and turn to him, as it was displayed towards the Gentiles upon their conversion. The bowels of his mercy yearned over them in their lost estate; and he longed for their return, as a father for that of his child gone from him. When the time of life was come, he saw them while they were yet afar off, and had compassion on them, and ran forth to meet them by the preaching of the apostles, and embraced them in the arms of his mercy, and gave them the sure pledge and token of reconciliation and love, by the word and spirit of his mouth. No sooner did he behold them making their humble confession to him, meekly kneeling on their knees, than he ordered his ministers to bring forth from the wardrobe of heaven the best robe, the robe of righteousness and garment of salvation; that fine white linen, spotless and bright as the sun, which is the righteousness of saints, the wedding garment of the church of the redeemed. These robes the Father commanded the ministers of his sanctuary to bring forth, and put them on the new converts, by investing them in baptism with all the righteousness, merits,

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and graces of the Lord Jesus Christ; giving them at the same time, a lively impression of his Spirit which is the seal of adoption, a pledge of the inheritance in heaven, an earnest of the eternal promises, a token of their espousals to the Lamb of God, signified in the parable by "putting a ring on his hand;" bestowing on them such graces and assistances as might enable them to walk in the way of his commandments and in the practice of good works, to secure themselves from the thorns of worldly cares and the mire of earthly pleasures, and to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and all the power of the enemy, the devil and his temptations, all which is described by "putting shoes upon his feet." And, lastly, the ministers were to prepare the Christian sacrifice, on which the now accepted Gentiles were to feast at the table of their heavenly Father, singing and making melody to the Lord, with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven: "O sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the "Lord, all the earth. Sing unto the Lord, bless his "name; show forth his salvation from day to day. "He hath remembered his mercy and truth; his "righteousness hath he openly showed in the sight "of the Heathen, and all the ends of the earth have "seen the salvation of our God. Therefore make "a joyful noise unto the Lord all the earth, make a "loud noise, and rejoice and sing praise. Sing unto "the Lord with the harp, with the harp and the "voice of a psalm. With trumpets and sound of "cornet make a joyful noise before the Lord the "king." Such was the joy at the reception of the

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returning prodigal, because he who had been dead in sin, was alive to righteousness; and he who had been lost to the church for ages and generations, was found and restored to it. Well, surely, might they "begin to be merry." Who would not be merry with them? Who could have any objection to their being so? Alas! there is one that never would be merry with them, and to this day cannot bear that they should be so, but gnashes his teeth, and consumes away with envy. And that is our elder brother the Jew, whose unreasonable behaviour upon this occasion, with the father's just reproof to him, is represented to us in the concluding part of the parable.

"Now his elder son was in the field; and as he "came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music "and dancing. And he called one of the servants, "and asked what these things meant? And he said "unto him, Thy brother is come, and thy father hath "killed for him the fatted calf, because he hath re-"ceived him safe and sound. And he was angry, "and would not go in; therefore came his father "out, and entreated him. And he answering, said "to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, "neither transgressed I at any time thy command-"ment; and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I "might make merry with my friends: but as soon "as this thy son was come, who hath devoured thy "living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the "fatted calf. And he said unto him, Son, thou art "ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was "meet that we should make merry, and be glad;

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"for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; "and was lost, and is found."

The Jews, hearing the sound of the Gospel, and the voice of joy and rejoicing in the church, were continually "calling to the servants" of God, the apostles and first preachers of the word, and asking "what these things meant;" and were always answered, as in the parable, that "their brother was "come;" that God had granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life; that *they* were now come into the church; and the one great sacrifice was offered for them, and for all men. And are not the words of the parable fulfilled to this day? "They are an-"gry, and will not come in." No, not though their Father, God Almighty, time after time came out and entreated them by the voice of his Son, by the preaching of his apostles, by the allurements of his mercies, and by the terror of his judgements. All, all would not do. Their Father they rebelled against, his Son they crucified, his apostles they persecuted, his mercies they forgot, and his judgements they defied. Seventeen hundred years are past; still, still "they are angry, and will not come in!" Their plea is, as represented in the parable, that they served God many years; that they never transgressed at any time his commandment; that God had not showed them sufficient marks of his favour; but treated this worthless prodigal Gentile better than he had treated them; a plea, every article of which is full of pride, falsehood, and envy. Pride is at the bottom of all. They loved to justify themselves by the works of the law, as St. Paul says of them;



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"going about to establish their own righteousness "by the works of the law, they did not submit them-"selves to the righteousness of God, which is by "faith in Jesus Christ." Accordingly their plea runs altogether in the boasting strain. First, "They had "served God many years." Not to mention *how* they had served him, it was God that enabled them both to will and to do; so that there was no room for boasting. Secondly, "They had never, at any "time, transgressed his commandment;" in other words, they thanked God they were not as other men were, adulterers, fornicators, extortioners, unjust, or even as this prodigal Gentile. Now, supposing all this to be true, they were still unprofitable servants; they had done only that which it was their duty to do. But St. Stephen convinced them that they were infamous transgressors, having, indeed, received the law, but not kept it; so that what they reckoned matter of glorying, was, in reality, the sentence of their condemnation. In this part of their plea, therefore, there is a mixture of pride and falsehood. Thirdly, "God had not showed them suffi-"cient marks of his favour." This was false, for he was continually showering his benefits upon them; and for many, many years, their fleece had the dew, when all the rest of the ground was dry. Fourthly, "He treated the Gentiles better than he had treated "them." This was false again, as well as envious; for if they would come in, they might have partaken with the Gentiles in the feast and the joy, and been for ever with them in the church; nor would the accession of the nations have diminished aught from them,

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but rather it would have added an infinite increase of joy and pleasure to them, had the love of God and of their brother been in their hearts; as the light of the sun is not lessened, but increased, by being reflected at once from all the innumerable waves of the wide ocean. Indeed, the father in the parable, ever tender and loving, and willing to try every way to bring them in, does not object their transgressions to them, but answers upon their state of the case; that even supposing they had served and obeyed him as they said they had, they could never complain of wanting marks of his favour, seeing they had "ever been in "his house," the church, with him as his children, and "all that he had was theirs; for to them per-"tained the adoption, and the glory, and the cove-"nants, and the giving of the law, and the service "of God, and the promises; theirs were the fathers; "and of them, as concerning the flesh, Christ came." Why, therefore, should they be angry, because the poor Gentiles were suffered to partake of these good things, when they had qualified themselves for it by repentance and faith? And what sort of materials must their hearts be made of, when they could not acquiesce in that tender, merciful, and loving declaration of their heavenly Father—"It was meet that "we should make merry and be glad; for this thy "brother was dead, and is alive again; was lost, "and is found?"

Beholding, therefore, the sad consequences of departing from our Father's house, let us take up the resolution of the holy Psalmist; "I will dwell in "the house of the Lord for ever." Let us think



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that we hear our blessed Master, astonished, as it were, to see himself forsaken by so many of his disciples, saying unto us, as once he did to the twelve, "Will ye also go away?" And let us answer with one accord, as they did by the mouth of St. Peter, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words "of eternal life." But what was it that seduced the prodigal Gentile to leave so gracious a Father, and to quit the house where his glory dwelt? What but an impatience of restraint, a fond desire of independency, and of being wise above what is written. Warned, therefore, by his fate, let us love the discipline that withholds us from sin; let us glory (if we must glory) in that dependency on our Maker, and those whom his providence has set over us, by which alone, after all, the church and the world are supported and preserved; and let us at last learn to believe in God, and rest assured, upon his word, that the *wisdom* of this world is as unsatisfactory as its riches, honours, and pleasures; and that, amidst the greatest abundance of them all, "a mighty fa-"mine will arise" in the soul for want of more substantial food; which, if it be not remedied in this life, by "seeking meat from God," will continue to torment in those regions of sorrow where hunger and despair are co-eternal.

Let the sinner, whom the chastising hand of God has brought to himself; whose eyes have been opened by affliction, to behold his real state and condition; who has felt the truth which he refused to believe, that the world is vanity, and sin folly; let such a one listen to the admonitions of conscience, and

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cherish the first dawnings of divine grace in his heart; that so the Sun of Righteousness, there arising, may disperse every cloud, and cause every shadow to fly away; till having by slow and imperceptible degrees ascended the heights of the sky, he stands fixed in his meridian, diffusing on all beneath him the perfect day. For, however darkness may at present cover the transgressor, and gross darkness overwhelm his soul, as once it did the Gentile world; yet let him know, to his great and endless comfort, that, upon his sincere repentance, the Lord shall arise likewise upon him, and his glory shall be seen upon him. Let him only follow the example of the returning prodigal, and he shall not fail of *his* reward, even reconciliation, and peace, and love, and joy, and rejoicing, in the house of his heavenly Father.

Lastly, let us of the nations whom undeserved mercy has numbered amongst the children of God, let us beware that we copy not after the pattern of the Jew, or envy him the glory of his future conversion and restoration. Rather let us endeavour to the utmost to forward so happy an event. And since of all human means, that of showing him the dispensations of Jesus, whom his wicked hands crucified, in his own Scriptures of the Old Testament, is the most likely to contribute towards the blessed work, let this be an additional motive to us to study day and night the true import of those lively oracles. But since such a conversion as this must be most eminently the work of the Almighty, let not our most fervent prayers be ever wanting to him, that he would now at length look down from heaven upon

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his ancient people; that he would take from them all ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt of his word, and so fetch them home to his flock, that they may be saved among the remnant of the true Israelites. May it be our happy lot, by our prayers and labours, to hasten the coming of that glorious day (though our eyes may not behold it) when the elder brother shall feel the just reproof of his Father piercing his inmost soul, and be prevailed upon to lay aside his pride, envy, and obstinacy; when the fulness of the Gentiles shall meet with the conversion of the Jews, and the two brothers, reconciled to their Father, and to each other, by the blood of Jesus, shall, with united hearts and voices, praise the Lord for his goodness, having each in his turn experience that his mercy endureth for ever.

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# DISCOURSE XXVI.

## KNOWLEDGE AND CHARITY.

1 CORINTHIANS, VIII. 1.

*Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.*

IN a place dedicated to the advancement of science, and before an audience of persons set apart for that purpose, it might seem an undertaking no less improper than invidious, to point out its ill effects, had not the great Doctor of the Gentiles authorized such a proceeding, and the present pious and judicious institution[a] demanded it at our hands. No person ever entertained a higher idea of true wisdom than St. Paul, who has employed the most exalted strains of divine oratory to set forth the excellency of knowledge and understanding. But yet the holy apostle saw, that learning makes not the man of God perfect; that something may still be wanting in him who is at the top of intellectual attainments; and

[a] A Benefaction left by Mr. MASTERS, for two Sermons to be preached on certain texts by him selected, tending to inculcate the duty of Christian *humility*, as opposed to the pride of science, and to point out the true nature and end of the *ministerial office*.

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that the complete scholar may fall short, at last, of the kingdom of heaven. He saw that spiritual, like bodily wealth, unless used for the benefit of others, would prove no blessing to its owner, serving only to hasten his fall and increase his condemnation. And, therefore, that the wise man might not glory in his wisdom, but sink into himself by humility as he rises above others in understanding, remembering always the account he must make, proportionable to the talents delivered, the apostle determines, that not only human learning, but the knowledge of all prophecies and mysteries, that is, of all the dispensations of God and every truth in the Scriptures, and that knowledge formed into an orthodox faith animated by a lively hope, will profit a man nothing, if charity, or divine love, be not superadded, which, like the vital heat in the human frame, may disperse and actuate all to the edification of the body.

This is the great argument of his epistle to the Corinthians; a people in whom their reputation for polite literature and a distinguished taste, had produced not a little conceit of themselves and their endowments. This temper and disposition they most unhappily brought with them into the church; where, not being mortified, as it ought to have been, by the spirit of the meek and humble Jesus, it began to display itself in religious, as it had before done in secular learning. The object was changed, but the passions were the same; and Christ himself was made the occasion of pride, envy, and contention, among those who all alike professed themselves to be his disciples. The new converts were soon divided into

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little parties struggling for the pre-eminence of their respective leaders, like so many sects of philosophers, rather than zealous for the glory of their Lord, as members of his one universal church. St. Paul does not accuse them of ignorance. On the contrary, he bears them witness, that they were "enriched with "all knowledge, and came behind in no gift;" but complains, notwithstanding, that they were still carnal; they did not "all speak the same thing," as brethren of one family and fellow-members of the same body should do, but formed themselves into separate factions and schisms; insomuch that he feared lest, in contending for knowledge, charity should have been pulled in pieces of them, while all sought to excel for the sake of excelling, and not to the edifying of the church; all regarded their own glory, not the advantage of their brethren, whom they cared not how much they offended, so they had but an opportunity of manifesting their own superiority.

A remarkable instance of this presented itself in the case of meat offered to an idol; concerning which the apostle tells them, "they had knowledge;" they knew "that an idol was nothing," and that therefore they might as well eat meat so offered as any other, provided it was not brought to them as such, and made a test of their faith. But then, he observes, there was not in every man that degree of knowledge. There were some who, through infirmity and over-scrupulousness, could not so eat without considering themselves as partakers of an idol-sacrifice. The danger therefore was, lest such, emboldened by the

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example of a brother better established in faith, should be led to sin against their own consciences, and so through the other's greater knowledge a weak brother should perish, for whom Christ died no less than for him that was stronger. Knowledge, thus used to the destruction of others, could never farther the salvation of its possessor. And therefore St. Paul declares, that if the case were to be pushed even to the utmost, charity should make him wave all the privileges of his knowledge, for the edification of his brother. "Wherefore if meat make my bro-"ther to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world "standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."

Upon this occasion it is that he advances the general assertion in the text; which resolves itself into these two propositions—

I. That knowledge without charity endeth in pride, and consequently in the destruction of him that hath it: "knowledge puffeth "up."

II. That charity directeth it to its proper end, the edification of the church: "charity edi-"fieth."

I. Knowledge without charity endeth in pride; it *puffeth up*, saith the apostle; it produceth an inflation in the mind, which, like a tumour in the body, carries the appearance of solidity, but has in reality nothing within, and only indicates a distempered habit. And indeed knowledge, as well as faith, if it be alone, is vain; it is dead. For all knowledge is given as a means to some end. The means abstracted from their end, cease to be means, and answer no

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purpose whatsoever. The end of knowledge is action. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye "do them[b]." Every article of the Creed involves in it a correspondent duty, and it is practice alone that gives life to faith, and realizes knowledge. What is true of human wisdom with regard to things temporal, is as true of divine with relation to things spiritual: "Through wisdom is an house builded, "and by understanding it is established, and by "knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all "precious and pleasant riches. A wise man is "strong, yea, a man of knowledge increaseth "strength; and by a man of understanding and "knowledge the state of a land shall be prolonged." "The science that terminates where it begins, in the "intellect, what availeth it?" Or what profit is there in the learning which promoteth not, in any measure, the interest either of the church or the state of which its proprietor is a member? "The manifestation of "the Spirit," as that Spirit himself testifies, "is given "to every man to PROFIT withal[c]." Otherwise it is of no effect; and the man becomes, as St. Jude finely describes such a character, like "a cloud "without water," raised aloft, as it should seem by its appearance, for the benefit of those beneath it; but how wretchedly are they disappointed! It sails along before the wind, proudly swelling in the sufficiency of its own emptiness, instead of dropping fatness and plenty on the lands over which it passes. "Knowledge puffeth up." And that this will always be the effect of it where charity is wanting, we may

[b] John, xiii. 17. [c] 1 Cor. xii. 7.

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fairly conclude from hence, that it always has been so; as shall be evinced by an induction of particulars.

But, before we consider the instances of this truth which have happened upon earth, we must ascend into heaven; and, if the lustre of the object be not too strong for our organs, there view the glories that once encircled Lucifer, the son of the morning, the bright leader of the armies above, first, as in command, so in the greatness of his knowledge. What the prophet Ezekiel says of the prince of Tyre, seems primarily applicable to him: "He sealed up "the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. "He was perfect in his ways from the day that he "was created, till iniquity was found in him[d]." Confined not, like man, within the bounds of a material creation, nor limited to ideas framed by analogy from sense, he beheld without a glass, the wonders of the kingdom of heaven, and saw, face to face, the eternal power and Godhead of him who made him. He saw, he knew; but he loved not. "His heart was lifted up because of his beauty; and "he corrupted his wisdom by reason of his bright-"ness." Conceit of his own excellency made him disdain the thought of man, in the person of the Messiah, being exalted over him; and he became, from the beginning, an opposer of the gracious counsel of infinite love to redeem the human race. The promulgation of this counsel before the world, is assigned, by some divines, as the time of the an-

[d] Ezek. xxviii. 12.

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gels' fall; that being most probably the ground of the war begun in heaven against the Head, and since carried on upon earth against the members[e]. But however this be, certain it is that through pride he fell: a proof to the learned of all ages, that knowledge without charity will turn a good angel into an evil one; an admonition to them not to expect that that alone should put man in possession of heaven, which, because it was alone, cast Lucifer himself out of it.

Yet this has all along been the fatal mistake; and the tree of knowledge still proved the occasion of a fall. Next to the majesty of Lucifer at the head of the angelic legions, was the glory of Adam, the lord of this lower world in Paradise. Formed in the image of his Maker to have dominion over the creation, he was replenished, for that purpose, with the treasures of wisdom from above; and the magnificence of his palace, great as it was, bore no proportion to the riches of his understanding. "He "was in Eden, the garden of God; every precious "stone was his covering, the sardius, topaz, and the "diamond; the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper; "the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and "gold[f]." He had a perfect knowledge of the nature, use, properties, and operations of the creatures, expressed in the names imposed by him. Nor staid his wisdom here; but in the things that were made he beheld reflected, as in a faithful mirror, the invisible things of God, who had taught him so to do.

[e] See Mr. Lesly's *History of Sin and Heresy*, in the first volume of his *Theological Works*.

[f] Ezek. xxviii. 13.

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With him he conversed frequently, as a man with his friend, in the holy sanctuary of Eden, that happy seat of instruction, contemplation, and devotion, framed, after the example of heavenly things, like the tabernacle, the temple, and the church, which have, since the fall, supplied, and are to supply, its place in the world, till all shall be fully restored at the resurrection of the just. There lived our first parent a life which we are now little able to conceive; a life not much short of angelical perfection, antedating by holiness, in the earthly copy, the felicity reserved for him in the heavenly original. But man, though placed by God in the state of honour, did not continue in it. Knowledge was the temptation; and even in Paradise it proved but too successful; it wrought destruction, we find, by pride. "The serpent," says Eve, "beguiled me;" or, as it is in the original, *elated, puffed me up*[g]. He persuaded her, it was not as God had said; she must know better. Revelation was an imposition upon the rights and liberties of the human understanding, and the command evidently contrary to the nature and reason of things; for "she saw the tree was pleasant to the "eyes, and good for food, and a tree to be desired to "make one wise!" Wisdom was to be acquired by a proper exertion of her faculties, and knowledge to be attained without being obliged for it to the revelation of God. Thus was she deluded into scepticism under the notion of a *free inquiry*, and induced to renounce God and heaven, as her seducer

[g] השיאני.

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had done before her, upon the principles of *the first philosophy;* hereby furnishing us with another sad proof, that knowledge without charity endeth in pride, and the destruction of the person who is possessed of it.

Were we to consider the several apostasies of mankind after their restoration by the promise of a Redeemer, and the establishment of the church upon that promise, it might perhaps appear that all the fruits of error and vice have sprung from the same root of bitterness. But as St. Paul, concluding all under sin, has divided the world into Jew and Gentile, it may suffice to take a cursory view of each.

To begin with the Gentiles; of whose fall the apostle gives this acccount: "When they knew God, "they glorified him not as God, neither were thank-"ful; but became vain in their imaginations, and "their foolish heart was darkened. Professing "themselves to be wise, they became fools[h]." Lack of knowledge, therefore, was not their original fault; "they knew God," for that knowledge was universal in the family of Noah; and, though depraved, it could not be quite extinguished for many generations. But knowledge in the understanding, for want of charity in the heart, did not operate to a holy obedience:—"When they knew God, they glorified him "not as God, neither were thankful." The truth, held, or detained, in unrighteousness, and imprisoned in an unholy conscience, passed not from their minds into their actions, that God might be glorified there-

[h] Rom. i. 21.

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by, and some return made to him (for such he is pleased to esteem it) by the gratitude of his creatures. Instead of this, they were filled with fantastic dreams of their own perfection, which put them upon disputing with each other for place and precedence in knowledge. "They became vain in their "imaginations, εν τοις διαλογισμοις, their altercating "reasonings." They wrangled upon every subject; till at length the most knowing among them gave up all for lost. Their learning consisted in being able to recount the various errors of preceding philosophers, and all that wisdom could do was to deny the existence of truth. Thus it was that "their foolish "heart was darkened." The light which they had abused shone no more; the sun of revelation set, by their departure from it; the knowledge transmitted by tradition gradually died away like the twilight, and a long night of darkness and blindness of heart succeeded. The world by wisdom and the efforts of its own reason, knew God no more. Wisdom, indeed, was what the philosophers still continued to profess; but, "professing to be wise, they became "FOOLS;" and all may profit by their experience, which confirms the truth of the apostolic assertion in the text, that "knowledge puffeth up."

Let us now turn our eyes towards the Jew. Behold him, the son of Abraham and heir of the promises, invested with the privileges of God's chosen, "having the form of knowledge, and of the truth in "the law," which he not only studies, but carries about as a perpetual monitor upon the borders of his garments, zealous for it even to madness. Yet be-

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hold him become an outcast of heaven and earth, his law abrogated, his city burnt to ashes, himself a fugitive and a vagabond, without king, priest, prophet, temple, or habitation, a by-word and a hissing among all the nations of the earth. Who is not curious to inquire into the cause of such astonishing misery, such unprecedented calamities? The cause is this: knowledge puffeth him up; his privileges became an occasion of boasting himself against his brethren, and envy ate out his charity. "Going about "to establish his own righteousness" upon the strength of his own wisdom, he rejected the Lord his righteousness, and nailed Him who is the source of wisdom to the cross, persecuting to the death all who offered to preach that righteousness and teach that wisdom to a sinful and ignorant world.

When the distinction of Jew and Gentile ceased, and one church (for that reason called *Catholic*) comprehended within its pale the believers of both denominations, knowledge puffed men up into heretics and schismatics. Pride made them rather choose to see themselves exalted at the head of a faction, than the church edified by their labours in an inferior station. This was the case in the church of Corinth, and has been the cause of every heresy and schism since. Novices, and persons whose heads are filled with religious notions while their hearts and affections are not yet subdued by charity, are apt to fancy themselves formed for something great and extraordinary. They think it matter of general lamentation that talents like theirs should be buried in obscurity;



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and therefore, since they cannot preside *in* the church, they are determined to preside *out* of it.

These instances, it is presumed, are sufficient to evince, that "knowledge puffeth up;" knowledge, I mean, without charity; for, had *that* accompanied it, all these things had never happened. Charity had kept Lucifer shining in his station, and rejoicing in the salvation of the human race. Charity had prevented the transgression and fall of man. Charity had employed the knowledge of the Gentile in glorifying God who gave it, and that of the Jew in promoting the kingdom of the Messiah, and the conversion of his brethren; and charity, among the members of Christ's body, had preserved it in peace and unity. But to show more at large that it is charity which directeth knowledge to its right end, the edification of the church, was the

II. Thing proposed. And this will be best done by setting before you some instances the reverse of the foregoing.

If, therefore, we ascend a second time into heaven, we shall find that the principle which opposed and triumphed over the knowledge of Lucifer inflated by pride, was the wisdom of God actuated by love. Praise and glory are due from man to all the divine attributes, for all were concerned in effecting his redemption; wisdom contrived, and power executed; but love set all to work, love perfected and crowned the whole. "The Lord is a God of knowledge;" but it was love which communicated that knowledge to mankind, which made the eternal wisdom to "re-

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"joice in the habitable part of the earth, and de-
"light to be with the sons of men." He is a God of power; but that could only terrify us, till love employed it against our enemies: for which reason, when the Psalmist singeth, "Great is our Lord, and "great is his power, yea, and his wisdom is infi-"nite;" he crowneth all by adding, "The Lord is "loving unto every man, and his mercy is over all "his works." Pride would have used knowledge to the aggrandizing itself at the expense of others; but love turned it to the advancement of others by humiliation of itself. The accuser of man was cast down, and man, in the person of the Messiah, exalted to an union with God. The knowledge which terminated in itself, sunk into the lowest hell; while that which sought the good of others, took its seat at the right hand of the Most High. The knowledge of Satan puffed him up to the destruction of himself and his adherents; the love of God built up the church of the redeemed unto salvation and glory everlasting.

To reverse the sad effects of a vain thirst after knowledge in our first parent, divine Love became incarnate, and appeared upon earth in a bodily shape, in the form and fashion of a man. "That which "was from the beginning the disciples heard; they "saw with their eyes, and their hands handled the "Word of Life." All that he did and all that he suffered, he did and suffered because he loved us, for the good of his church; not for his own advantage, but for us men, and for our salvation, he came down from heaven; and because he had taken upon



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him to deliver man, therefore he did not abhor the virgin's womb. For the uncircumcision of our hearts he underwent circumcision; and to wash away our pollutions, he was baptized; because man by the temptation of knowledge was seduced to infidelity and disobedience, he encountered and overcame the tempter by the word of God, and by love keeping the commandments. Jehovah by his prophet Isaiah had foretold of him, "By his knowledge shall my right-"eous servant justify many." The end of his knowledge was to be the justification of his chosen; and the promise was fulfilled; for, having "increased in "wisdom, he went about doing good." His learning produced not a morose self-complacency, but a lovely affability, and a desire to teach others the glad tidings of joy. The treasures of wisdom and knowledge were not suffered to rust and canker, locked up from the public by a supercilious reservedness; but out of them he continually dispersed abroad, and gave to the poor in spirit: of those who came to him he rejected none, and went to those who came not. The sun at its rising found the good Shepherd engaged in the care of his flock; and after it was set he did not forget them, but spent his nights in praying for those whom his days were employed in teaching. If his wisdom instructed the ignorant, and counselled the doubtful, his power afforded relief to the broken in heart and diseased in body, forgiving all their sins, and healing all their infirmities. His unwearied diligence in acting can only be equalled by his invincible patience in suffering. Behold him despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted

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with grief. Behold him without guile, condemned for an impostor; without sin, sustaining the punishment due to all the sin that ever was committed. He was wounded, but it was for our transgressions; he was bruised, but our iniquities bruised him. He carried our sorrows, because he bore our sins in his own body on the tree. There love regained what pride had lost; and the wound made in our nature by the fruit of the tree of knowledge, was healed by the leaves of the tree of life. The gates of Paradise were again unbarred, and the kingdom of heaven opened to all believers.

To combat the vain wisdom of the Greek, and the self-justifying arrogance of the Jew, the apostles were sent forth. "The Lord gave the word; great "was the company of those who published it." The Philistine held not David in greater contempt than was poured upon them by the Scribe and the disputer of this world. But they went to the attack, as David did, "in the name of the Lord of hosts;" and therefore the spear and the shield were of no account against them. God was with them, no less than with Israel before Jericho. Again the trumpet sounded; the walls again fell flat. The strong holds of false knowledge could not stand before the Gospel, and human imagination was soon captivated to the obedience of Christ. Blasted by the lightning of inspired eloquence, the arm of false philosophy withered and lost all its hold on the minds of men. Then kings with their armies did flee and were discomfited. They were assembled against the church, as clouds, in black and dark array, portending her utter destruc-

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tion; but at God's rebuke they fled; at the voice of his word, more powerful than the thunder in the heavens, they passed by together. They saw the effects of it, and so they marvelled; they were troubled, and hasted away. They acted the parts assigned them for a time, and then disappeared from the stage for ever. The Roman empire wondered to see itself Christian; to see the cross exalted in triumph over the globe, and the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ. But what was it that gained this victory over the pride of earth and hell? What, but the same all-suffering, and therefore all-subduing, charity, which taught the disciples of a crucified Jesus, after his example, to endure all things for the salvation of their brethren? Inspired with that love, they counted all things which the world could give them but loss, that they might win souls to Christ. They renounced all riches but the riches of grace; they sought no pleasure but that of doing their duty; and thought it honour sufficient to serve God. Labour, with persecution, they chose for their portion on earth, and looked for their advancement with their Master in the kingdom of heaven. The lamp, kindled in their hearts by the celestial fire of charity, never went out; the many waters of affliction could not quench it, neither could the floods of persecution drown it; and when the fury of the oppressor broke the earthen vessel that contained it, then was their victory, like that of Gideon, complete.

If, in the last place, we view the unity of the primitive church, as opposed to the sad divisions and

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distractions since produced by heresy and schism, it will appear that charity built up that solid and durable edifice, so different from the airy, fantastic structures of men puffed up in their fleshly minds. As at the formation of the church the Spirit descended upon the disciples, when "they were all "with one accord in one place," so, in like manner, after more were added to them, it is remarked, for our instruction, that "the multitude of the believers "were of one heart and one mind." The spirit of unity knit all the members together, insomuch that if one member suffered, the rest sympathized with it, and the honour of one was the glory of all. Each had its distinct office in a due subordination, but all conspired to preserve and support the body, to which all were necessary: and thus they "grew up into "him in all things, who is the head, even Christ, "from whom the whole body, fitly joined together, "and compacted by that which every joint suppli-"eth, according to the effectual working in the mea-"sure of every part, made increase of the body to "the edifying itself in love."

Wherefore, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses to the truth of both propositions contained in the text, all the inhabitants of heaven, and the generations of men, and the spirits in the infernal prison, being engaged on the side of one or other of them, what remains, but that we endeavour to escape the punishment by avoiding the crime of those who bear a mournful testimony to the truth of the former, and that we aspire after the reward by copying the example of those who joyfully

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attest the certainty of the latter. It is our happiness to live in a University, endowed by the liberality of founders and benefactors for our improvement in knowledge. As such she has long flourished; and her renown has gone forth into all lands. Long may she so flourish, even to the years of many generations, and lift up her sacred towers as long as the sun and the moon shall endure, above all her enemies round about; never reduced to the necessity of subsisting upon her former reputation, but still reaping a fresh harvest from the learning of her children! Upon them all eyes are turned. The advantages they enjoy of devotion, solitude, leisure, and a mutual intercourse of study—advantages extolled and envied by all but such as have neglected to use them—loudly call upon them to be ever vigilant, and most exceedingly zealous for the interest and honour of their common parent; to see that she decline not with a declining world, nor become infected with the corrupt and erroneous principles of a licentious and ungodly age; but that she follow after such a knowledge as may profit, and use that knowledge aright unto edification. For if even the knowledge that can save works destruction, unless brought into action by charity, what shall we say, in the day when we are judged, should we be found to have laboured after a knowledge that cannot save? Our founders (let it never be forgotten) were the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the friends of mankind; and if ever the glory of the one and the good of the other directed the actions of any men, they certainly were the motives of planting these illustrious semina-

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ries of truth and piety. Let the knowledge that tends to promote this blessed end, such a knowledge as charity may employ to the use of edifying, be, therefore, the grand subject of all our studies, and the daily entertainment of our most serious thoughts. This wisdom is the principal thing, therefore let us get it; and with all our gettings, let us get this understanding. And, when in the well-spent hours of a studious retirement we shall have secured the inestimable treasure, let charity go forth and disperse it abroad; for so the blessed saint of this day, having been trained to knowledge in the school of solitude, was called forth to action upon the theatre of the world. Sequestered for a season from the scenes of vanity and iniquity, he passed his first years in the recesses of the desert, under the discipline of the Holy Ghost, the tuition of angels, and in conversation with God by meditation and prayer. But when in the providential disposition of men and things, the day came for his "showing unto Israel," then he brake forth like a stream from the bowels of the earth, or the sun from a cloud, to refresh the thirsty soul with the glad tidings of the Gospel, and enlighten the world with the glorious truths of the kingdom of heaven; hereby showing us, that knowledge and charity between them make up the character of a minister of Christ. Charity cannot edify without knowledge, nor will knowledge edify without charity. Let our retirement, therefore, resemble that of the Baptist, that our manifestation also may be like his, and that as our charity abounds in knowledge, our knowledge may not be unfruitful in charity. So shall

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we escape the condemnation of the heretic and the schismatic, by adhering to the communion of the faithful; avoid the philosophical pride of the Gentile, and the pharisaical self-sufficiency of the Jew, by writing after the copies of the apostles; guard against the sin of our first parent, by an imitation of Jesus Christ; and finally inherit the thrones of the fallen angels, by an union with the God of love: to which blessed estate may God of his infinite mercy bring us all, by the means of that knowledge which worketh by love, unto the edification of his church and his own glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord!

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# DISCOURSE XXVII.

## THE DUTY OF TAKING NO THOUGHT FOR THE MORROW.

MATTHEW, VI. 34.

*Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself: sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*

WHAT? Take no thought, no thought at all for the morrow? attend only to the day that is passing over us, and make no provision for the future? Are we not to look forward; to suppose a continuation of life, and a want of the means which are necessary to support it? Should we sit still, with our arms folded, and expect that Providence will supply us with those means, without using our own endeavours? Is not the husbandman, when he has reaped one harvest, to sow his seed for another? Most undoubtedly he is. The Scriptures suppose all men to have some occupation, and to be labouring in it, that the state of the world may be upholden. They tell us, in the Old Testament, that "the hand of the diligent maketh "rich;" and in the New, that "if any man will not "work, neither should he eat." In the former, man is sent to learn wisdom of "the ant, which provideth

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"her meat in the summer, and gathereth for food "in the harvest," with a view to the approaching winter; in the latter we read, that "the parents "should lay up for the children." In a word, no one thing is more severely condemned and exposed, than the folly of the sluggard, who has the presumption to tempt God, by imagining that all the blessings of Heaven will descend on the head of idleness, and that meat will drop into his mouth if he does but condescend to open it.—How are these very different directions to be reconciled?

The truth is, that the Greek word here rendered *take no thought*, signifies properly, Be not *anxious, solicitous, miserable* about to-morrow; literally and strictly, be not of a *doubtful, divided mind.* For all care supposes a person to be wavering, drawn hither and thither by different motives, first one way and then another, not knowing how to fix and determine; since, when this is once firmly and finally done, the trouble ceases, and the man is at ease. Before that, the mind is *distracted*, that is, drawn diverse ways at the same time, like the body of a criminal, in some countries, torn in pieces by horses pulling in opposition to each other. They who have felt the torment of such a state of mind know what I mean, and what is so beautifully expressed by the original word in this place of Scripture, which thus kindly commands us not to make ourselves wretched by anxious carings and apprehensions about the future; but, in all cases of difficulty, to perform diligently that part which appears wisest and best for us to perform; then to resign the matter into the hands of God; quietly and

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patiently waiting the event before it comes, and humbly acquiescing in it when it does come. In short, so to use our endeavours, as if they were to effect every thing; so to trust in God, as if they were to effect nothing.

But let us not be too hasty in blaming our worthy translators. They could not have been ignorant, any more than we are, that it was impossible for Christ to give such a precept as at first sight this appears now to be. But they wrote above 150 years ago; and there is good reason for supposing, that the expression to *take thought*, did at that time generally denote the very thing, which, as has been shown you, the Greek word most certainly means, *viz. to take anxious thought*, or *to be anxiously careful*, to be *uneasy*.

In this sense, which is the only true sense, "take "no thought for the morrow" is excellent advice; and advice which is much needed. All things are full of labour. Walk the streets of a large city, or travel the roads that lead to one, and you will soon be convinced of it. But the continual hurry and bustle, the incessant rolling and agitation without us, are nothing, if compared to those within us. Whatever appearances men may put on, or however they may affect to disguise the matter, the world of minds is a very uneasy and restless world; and could it be fully and fairly disclosed to view, we should behold it like another ocean, in some parts all storm and tempest; in others ever ebbing and flowing; in no part perfectly at rest. He who once, by the word of his power, calmed the winds, and laid the waves,

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when all was uproar and confusion among them, has spoken peace likewise to *this* troubled sea, in the discourse of which my text is the conclusion. Let us go over it together, and weigh well the reasons given by our Saviour, why man should cease to be anxious, and permit God to govern in his own way the world which he himself has made.

As anxiety proceeds from a *divided* state of mind, our Lord first speaks to that point, and strikes at the root of the disorder: "No man can serve two ma-"sters."—The commands which they lay upon him will often be contrary to each other. Both cannot be obeyed; and while the man hesitates which to obey, sometimes inclining to one, sometimes to the other, he must needs be unhappy. Would you then enjoy peace and quietness within? Serve one master, and let that master be God. Do your duty, and trust him for the event. The wise son of Sirach is very bold upon this subject, and appeals to universal experience: "Look at the generations of old, and see; "did ever any trust in the Lord and was confounded?" But why then are so many confounded? Because so few, so very few, do really trust in God when the hour of trial comes. They have recourse to the enemy for expedients; they follow the directions and maxims of the world; they sell themselves to another master, and provoke God to forsake them. The reproof of the prophet Elijah comes home to us all, and admits of no reply—"Why halt ye between two "opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if "Baal, then follow him." Only be consistent; let profession and practice go together. It is the want

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of this consistency which exposes religion to the scoff of those who hate it, and does it more hurt than all the books that ever were written against it; as the examples of those, who, in despite of temptations, hold them fast by God, and continue steadfast unto the end, do it, perhaps, more good than all the books that ever were written *for* it. Of this, however, rest assured, that, try as long as you will, and be as cunning as you please, "you cannot serve God and "mammon."

"Therefore," continues Christ, "I say unto you, "be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or "what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what "ye shall put on." An unreasonable anxiety and solicitude about the things of the world, even *food* and *raiment*, the *necessaries* of life, is plainly deemed by our Lord to be a serving of mammon. He who is so intent even on the means of subsistence, as to lose all the satisfaction of it, has but little faith. He is, in effect, an unbeliever. On the other hand, to rely so much upon providence, as to do nothing at all, is to tempt God. But to labour without placing our trust and confidence in our labour, expecting all from the blessing of God; this is to obey him, to work with his providence, to set the springs of it a going, and to imitate Christ and the saints by a sedate care and an industrious confidence. He whose mind, through the influence of religion upon it, is calm and resigned, will always exert his diligence to the best advantage. Fretfulness and impatience not only do not assist, but they hinder. A person in this state has not the use of his powers and faculties,

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which he otherwise would have; besides that the Holy Spirit of God flies from such a temper, delighting to dwell in a meek, quiet, and contented heart. —But, perhaps, you have not things as you could wish to have them, through some fault or mismanagement of your own; and it is this which troubles you. You have made some false step. Nothing more probable. We all make many. The famous Marshal Turenne, who was a good man, as well as a great general, used to say, he was not more obliged to any of his friends, than to one who had given him, at his first setting out in life, the following piece of advice: "When you have made a false step, spend "not a moment in vexing yourself, and moaning over "it; but consider how it may best be repaired, and "instantly set about it[a]."

Christ, in his divine discourse, lays down several reasons why men should not disquiet themselves about the wants of life, or concerning the future; but, having done their part, should repose themselves in full confidence of the goodness of God.

[a] "The mountainous nature of this country (the Pays de "Vaud) subjects it to frequent torrents, which, when violent, "sweep away vines, soil, and walls, in one common destruction. "The inhabitants behold the havock with a steady concern, "and, without giving way to the clamorous rage of the French, "or sinking into the gloomy despair of the English, think only "of the most effectual means of repairing the loss.—As soon as "the storm has abated, they begin, with admirable patience "and perseverance, to rebuild the walls, to carry fresh earth "on hurdles to the top of the mountain, and to spread a new "soil wherever the old one has been washed away." Moore's View of Society and Manners in France, Swisserland, &c. I. 313.

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The first reason is, the experience of greater benefits already received. "Is not the life more than "meat, and the body than raiment? You are uneasy lest you should want proper food to support life, and proper raiment to clothe the body. Life and the body are certainly greater gifts than food and raiment. Who gave you *them?* God gave them; and gave them of his own will, before you could be in a capacity to ask them. Will not he who gave the greater, give the less? Will not he who gave life and the body, take care they shall be supported and clothed? Will he, who gave what you could not ask, withhold what you can and do ask at his hands? It is ingratitude to distrust your best Benefactor. Consider, likewise, under this head, the proofs you have had of God's kindness in providing for you hitherto: look back on your past life, and mark the blessings of various kinds that have distinguished the several parts of it; the difficulties you have surmounted, the dangers you have escaped, and the favourable circumstances and connexions into which you have been led. Why should you apprehend, that he who has been with you all your life long, should now be with you no longer? Recollect the promise, "I will "never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Above all things, forget not that greatest and most stupendous of mercies, that best and unspeakable gift of God, and the unanswerable argument formed upon the consideration of it by the apostle, "He who "spared not his own Son, but gave him up for "us all, how shall he not with him also freely give



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"us all things?"—Reflect on this, and "be not "faithless, but believing."

The second reason alleged by Christ is, the example of the lesser animals, which the providence of God feeds without their own labour. "Behold "the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do "they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your hea-"venly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much "better than they?"

The little innocent inhabitants of the air, which are continually flying around us, were not created only for the use of the body of man. They serve higher and nobler ends. They often read lectures to which the greatest philosopher might attend, and be the better for them, if he would consider and apply them aright. When, therefore, you behold one of these choristers of heaven singing upon a naked bush, amidst the darkness and desolation of winter, might you not address it in some such manner as the following?—"Sweet bird, how cheerfully dost thou "sit and sing; and yet knowest not where thou art, "nor where thou shalt make thy next meal, and at "night must shroud thyself in this same bush for a "lodging, while the winds shall howl through it, and "thy feathers shall be wet with the rain, or covered "with the snow! How ought I to blush, who see be-"fore me such liberal provisions of my God, and "find myself sitting warm under my own roof, yet "am ready to droop through a distrustful and un-"thankful dulness! Had I so little certainty of my "support and shelter, how anxious and heartless

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"should I be; how little disposed to make music for "thee or myself? Surely thou camest not hither "without a Providence; God sent thee not so much "to delight, as to shame me out of my sullen unbe-"lief, who, under far more apparent means of main-"tenance and protection, am less cheerful and con-"fident. Reason and faith, alas! alas! have not "yet done for me what mere instinct does for "thee; and want of foresight makes thee more "merry, if not more happy here, than the foresight "of better things maketh me. Certainly, thy pro-"vidence, O God, is not impaired by those supe-"rior powers thou hast given me; let not my "greater helps hinder me from possessing a holy "security, and comfortable reliance on thee. I "never knew an earthly Father take care of his "fowls and neglect his children; and shall I sus-"pect this of my heavenly Father? That man is un-"worthy to have God for his father in heaven, who "depends less upon his goodness, wisdom, and "power, than upon a crop of corn, which may be "spoiled either in the field or the barn[b]."

But forcibly as these little animals teach, the parts of inanimate nature are by no means behind-hand with them. Walk into a flower-garden, and see with what beautiful garments God has invested the perishable grass, which, to-day is, and to-morrow withers away. Above the rest, look at the lovely white of the lily, pure and spotless as its parent, the

[b] See Bp. HALL's Occasional Meditations, No. xiv.; and QUESNELL *in loc.*



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light of heaven. Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like it. It resembles a greater than Solomon, whose face did shine as the sun, and whose raiment was white as the light, so as no fuller on earth, no effort of human skill and labour, could whiten it. From a flower of the field, then—from a flower of a moment's duration, man, who is made for heaven and eternity, may learn how low the care of Providence vouchsafes to stoop. And shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Shall he not protect and adorn his chosen people, the plants of his own hand, the flowers of his own paradise? Yes, verily, believe in him, and he shall bring it to pass. The light of his countenance shall shine, the dew of his celestial benediction shall descend upon you, enabling you to grow up and flourish, to reflect glory on your Maker, and to cheer the hearts of men. And, although your appointed time on earth be short, and you likewise must fade away, and return to dust; yet even from that dust can the same influences call you forth, to be clothed with honour and immortality, to enjoy a perpetual spring, and bloom for ever in unfading beauty. Such are the lessons of confidence in God's mercy, and resignation to his will, which meet us every time we take a walk in a garden.

Another reason urged by our Saviour against indulging that wretched care which has fretted so many hearts in pieces, is its fruitlessness. When we have been uneasy for half a century, what has it availed us? Nothing. It is not in our power to add a day to our lives, or a foot to our stature. Which of you,

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by being anxious and careful overmuch, can add one cubit to his stature? By taking contentedly and cheerfully our portion of food, the body attains, in due time, to that size and height which God has appointed, and lasts as long as he intends it should. Fretfulness and impatience may diminish something, but can add nothing. To what purpose, then, serves anxiety? If it cannot do the less, it certainly cannot do the greater. Uneasiness and distrust render us unworthy of that blessing without which all our labour is in vain. And no wonder they should do so. He who *distrusts* a friend, is very near *forsaking* him; and a man is not far from murmuring against Providence, when he is dissatisfied with its conduct. This is so very dangerous a temper of mind, that we should always be on our guard against falling into it, as many are apt to do, upon slight and common occasions, merely for want of consideration. If we acknowledge a God who governs the world, let us not distrust him, or find fault with his government, but repent, tremble, and adore.

To do otherwise is, in effect, to renounce our religion, and return to *Heathenism*. It is our Lord's own observation; "Therefore, be not anxiously "thoughtful, saying, What shall we eat? or, What "shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be cloth-"ed? for, after all these things do the Gentiles "seek." They employ their whole care in seeking them. And why? Because they either believe there is no God, or if there be, that he does not concern himself with the affairs of the world. In either case, men are left to themselves, and have no one

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else on whom to depend. With believers the case is different. "Your heavenly Father," says Christ to his disciples, "knoweth that ye have need of all "these things." There cannot be a more expressive and affecting image. A child, who has a father in being, can only wish that his necessities should be made known to that father; because, when once known, he is certain they will be supplied. But from *our* Father no secrets are hidden. His wisdom is equal to his goodness, and his power equal to both. When, therefore, we have used our own endeavours, as he has directed us to do, we may, with the confidence of children, "cast all our care upon him; "since," without doubt, "he careth for us." The misfortune is, that amongst all our cares, we care little for him and think little of him, unless when the attention is roused by a clap of thunder, or some extraordinary event which affects us for the time, as that does. We have only a distant, uncertain notion of him floating in our minds. We do not consider him as present round about us, and, what is more, present within us, and perfectly acquainted with all that is passing in the inmost chamber of the heart. We neglect him, and therefore he seems to neglect us—I say, he *seems* to neglect us; for that very seeming neglect is graciously intended to humble, and reform, and bring us to a better mind, that we may become objects of his favour, and partake of his blessings.

This is our Lord's next argument: "Seek ye "first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, "and all these things shall be added unto you." Christ does not mean to say, that if a man will be-

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come religious, he will immediately give him wealth. Certainly not: since if the party in question were ever so good a man, that might be the most effectual way in the world to make him a bad man. He might have something lurking in his constitution, either of body or mind, which would render him incapable of resisting the temptations of a large fortune; and He who knows all things, knows this would be the case. Numberless are the persons, to whose happiness such an estate would not add a single grain, but quite the reverse; and the greatest kindness that can be showed them, is to keep it out of their way, though you will never persuade them to think so. But thus much the promise implies, that to him who first and principally seeks, as he ought to do, the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and is not wanting to himself, shall be added food and raiment, and such other things as are convenient and proper for him, such things as are really and truly, all circumstances considered, best for him upon the whole, and will hereafter appear to have been so.—But is not wealth then a blessing? To those who can manage and employ it to the glory of God, and the good of mankind, it is a blessing, for this reason, because "it is more blessed to give than to receive;" but the number of these is small, very small indeed. If religion therefore does not give a man wealth, it does not give him that which is much more likely, at the long run, to prejudice than to benefit him. If religion does not give a man wealth, it makes him happy without it; if it does not enable him to have what he likes, it enables him to like what he

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has. And, as an apostle observes, "the time is "short;" this present scene of things will soon be changed; "it remains, therefore, that he who has an "estate be (towards God) as if he had none;" which is much the harder task of the two.

Since, then, the promise of worldly necessaries and comforts is made on the condition of seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, let him, who thinks he has not his share of good things in this life, retire into his closet for half an hour, and ask himself a few questions; as—Have I ever really and in earnest sought the kingdom of God and his righteousness? Do I so much as know what they are? or have I taken any pains to inquire? If I have inquired, and understood their nature, do I not rather seek after any thing than after them? Is not either business, or pleasure, or even idleness itself, that most irksome and tormenting of states, preferred before them? Do I give one hour out of the four-and-twenty to the contemplation of them? Have I entered into the kingdom of God? or rather, has the kingdom of God entered into me? Is it within me, and does it manifest itself without me? Does Christ rule in my heart by faith? and do my appetites and passions move in obedience to that heavenly principle? Do I love God, and delight in prayer and praise? Do I love my neighbour, and rejoice to assist and benefit him, to cover his faults, and overlook his infirmities? Are those tempers alive and reigning in me, which Christ has pronounced *blessed?* and, in the general and common course of my thoughts, words, and actions, do I consider myself as in his

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presence, to whom I must give account? The answers returned by conscience to such questions as these, would perhaps show the best man living that, if he have not all he wanted, there is no just reason for complaint. There is another consideration which may completely settle your minds, on the subject of the distresses to which the righteous are sometimes exposed in this present life. A very good man may be rendered much better by trials and afflictions. Proportionable to his sufferings will be his reward; and if you could propose the question to those saints in heaven who once wandered destitute, afflicted, tormented, in sheep-skins and goat-skins, upon earth, they would tell you, they do not now wish to have done otherwise.

Our Lord closes his interesting and divine discourse on this subject of worldly care and anxiety, in the words of my text, with an argument drawn from the evident absurdity of anticipating sorrow, and rendering ourselves unhappy beforehand: "Be not "therefore careful for the morrow; for the morrow "will be careful for the things of itself: sufficient unto "the day is the evil thereof." The meaning is, that having such a promise from our heavenly Father, of being provided for as his children, if we are but dutiful children, we should not render ourselves miserable by forestalling mischief, and adding the future to the present; but that, having, through his grace, transacted the business and overcome the difficulties of the day, we should at night disburthen our minds of solicitude, and rest our weary heads upon our pillows in peace; since the trouble of each day is suf-

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ficient for the day; and He who has been with us to-day, will be with us to-morrow.

In this ever-memorable and most important precept, Christ consults our natural quiet, no less than our spiritual welfare. The chief sources of uneasiness are, vexation at what is *past*, or forebodings of what is *to come:* whereas what is *past* ought to give us no disquiet, except that of repentance for our faults; and what is *to come* ought much less to affect us, because with regard to us and our concerns, it is not, and perhaps never will be. The *present* is what we are apt to neglect. That, well employed, will render the remembrance of the *past* pleasant, and the prospect of the *future* comfortable. Attention to the duties of the day is like the manna, when it descended fresh and grateful from above; anxiety about the events of to-morrow resembles the same manna when, distrustfully laid up contrary to the divine command, it bred worms and putrefied. Give us, then, blessed Lord, even as thou hast commanded us to ask at thy hands, our *daily* bread; and let it not be corrupted by discontented and unthankful imaginations. Thou art the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Thou hast borne us from the womb; thou hast supported us from our youth up, even until now. Thou forsakest none but those who have first forsaken thee. Only enable us to trust in thee, and then we shall never be confounded!

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# DISCOURSE XXVIII.

## THE DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR.

2 Corinthians, v. 17.

*Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

The departure of the old year and the entrance of a new one, cannot but suggest many useful and very important reflections to a thinking man. I will beg leave to offer some few to your minds, exactly as they have arisen in mine.

The departure of the old year may, I think, fitly be compared to the death of an old friend; and our behaviour in one case regulated by that which generally obtains in the other.

1. When we have lost a friend, our first care naturally is, to see that he be decently interred; to follow him mourning to the grave; to let his funeral remind us of our own; and to erect a monument to his memory.

The past year is, to all intents and purposes, lost to us, and numbered among the dead. It is gone to join the multitude of years that have died before it.

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They arise from their seats in the repositories of the dead, to receive it among them; it is now become like one of them; and all that hurry and bustle of business and pleasure which distinguished and animated it, have sunk into silence and oblivion. It will return no more upon the earth; and the scenes that were acted in it are closed for ever. It has lived, however, and we have enjoyed it; let us pay the honours due to the deceased, and drop a tear over its tomb. We cannot take a final leave of any thing to which we have been accustomed, without a sentiment of concern. Objects, otherwise of the most indifferent nature, claim this; and they never fail of obtaining it at the hour of parting. The idea of the *last* is always a melancholy idea; and it is so, perhaps, for this among other reasons, because, whatever be the immediate subject, an application is presently made to ourselves. Thus, in the case before us, it is recollected —and let it be recollected—it is good for us to recollect it—that what has happened to the year, must happen to us. On each of us a day must dawn, which is to be our last. When we shall have buried a few more years, we must ourselves be buried; our friends shall weep at our funeral; and what we have been, and what we have done, will live only in their remembrance. The reflection is sorrowful; but it is just and salutary: equally vain and imprudent would be the thought of putting it away from us. Meanwhile let us cast our eyes back on that portion of time which is come to its conclusion, and see whether the good thoughts that have occurred to our minds, the good words that have been uttered, and the good deeds

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that have been performed by us, will not furnish materials with which we may erect a lasting monument to the memory of the departed year.

2. When a friend is dead and buried, we take a pensive kind of pleasure in going over again and again the hours we formerly passed with him, either in prosperity or adversity. Let us pursue the same course; it may be done to great advantage in this instance. The grand secret of a religious life is, to "set God always before us;" to live under a constant sense of his providence; to observe and study his dispensations towards us, that they may produce their proper effects, and draw forth suitable returns from us. Too often we suffer them to glide unheeded by us, and never afterwards think of recalling them to consideration! It were well if we kept a diary of our lives for this purpose, if we "so numbered "our *days*, that we might apply our hearts unto wis-"dom." But certainly no *year* should be permitted to expire without giving occasion to a retrospect. The principal events that have befallen us in it should be recollected, and the requisite improvements be raised from them severally by meditation. What preservations from dangers spiritual or temporal have been vouchsafed; what new blessings granted, or old ones continued, to me and mine, to my friends, my neighbours, my church, my country; and how have I expressed, in word and in deed, my gratitude and thankfulness for them? With what losses or crosses, what calamities or sicknesses, have we been visited; and have such visitations rendered us more penitent, more diligent, devout, and holy,

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more humble, and more charitable? If the light of heaven hath shined on our tabernacle, and we have enjoyed the hours in health and happiness, let us enjoy them over again in the remembrance: if we have lived under a dark and stormy sky, and affliction has been our lot, let us consider that so much of that affliction is gone, and the less there is of it to come. But, whatever may be gone or to come, all is from God, who sends it not without a reason, and with whom if we co-operate, no event can befall us which will not in the end turn to our advantage. Such reflections as these should, indeed, be always made at the time when the events do befall us. But if not made then, they should be made at some time, which yet will not be done, unless some time be appointed for making them. And what time so fit as that when one year ends and another begins; when, having finished a stage of our journey, we survey, as from an eminence, the ground we have passed, and the sight of the objects brings to mind the occurrences upon that part of the road?

3. When a friend is taken from us, we begin to consider whether we profited by him as we ought, while he was with us; whether we sufficiently observed his good example, to imitate it; his wholesome advice, to follow it; his faithful and kind reproofs, to be the better for them by amending our faults. In the course of the foregoing year, many good examples must we have seen and heard of; and by means of books and conversation from without, and hints from our consciences within, much wholesome advice, many faithful and kind reproofs, must

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we have met with. For all these admonitions are we the better, and have we profited by them? Let it be supposed, for instance, that we had been accustomed aforetime to pray but seldom, and, when we did, to pray without attention, and without fruit. Do we now observe the hours of prayer with more constancy and less distraction? Do we really and truly find any pleasure in our devotions? or are we dragged unwillingly to them as a task, and, consequently, rejoice with all our hearts when they are over? For years together, perhaps, we have turned our backs on the communion table. Is it in our intention to give that holy ordinance a more frequent attendance for the future? Do we hear a sermon with a determined resolution to carry what is said into practice, or as a matter of amusement only, and a subject whereon to display our powers of criticism? Does the current of our thoughts flow in any degree more pure than formerly? Is our conversation become innocent, at least, if not improving; free from slander and scandal, from pride and conceit? Are our actions more and more directed by the rules of justice and charity? Above all, what use do we make of the talents with which it hath pleased God to intrust us, particularly those two, our *time*, and our *fortunes*? Is it altogether such as that we shall be able, on our death-beds, to think on it, before God, with comfort and confidence? When we examine ourselves as to the progress we have made in the Christian life since this day twelvemonth, do we find that we have made any progress at all, that

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we have discarded any evil habits, or acquired any good ones; that we have mortified any vices, or brought forward to perfection any virtues? In one word, as we grow older, do we grow wiser and better? These are the questions which should be asked at the conclusion of a year—And may the heart of every person here present return to them an answer of peace!

4. While we are following a friend to his grave, it is obvious to reflect, that his day of trial is at an end, that the time allotted him for his probation is over, and his condition fixed for eternity. Engaged in the awful speculation, we can hardly avoid the following reflection: if, instead of his being taken from us, we had been taken from him, what at this time had been our lot and portion in the other world? By the favour of God we have lived to the end of the year: we might have died before it. In such case where had we now been? Have we no misgivings within? Do we feel as if we thought all would have been right? Are we conscious to ourselves of having stood prepared at all times, and for all events, in such habits of repentance, faith, and charity, as would have rendered our passage hence welcome and prosperous? If not, should we delay, for a moment, to make such preparation, and to stand in such habits?—Suppose any person had means of being assured, and actually were assured, that he should die upon the last day of the year into which he is now entered, we should all agree upon the manner in which such person ought to spend the year. There would not be, I dare

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say, one dissentient voice. Yet, upon the supposition here made, this person has before him a whole year certain. Is not the obligation then still stronger upon every one of us? For that man must be out of his senses, who can bring himself to imagine that *he* has a whole year certain, or a month, or a day, or an hour.—The argument is not to be answered.

I have somewhere read of one who, having strong religious impressions, and feeling terrible apprehensions whenever the ideas of death and judgement presented themselves, contrived so to habituate his mind to the contemplation of them, as to render them ever after, not only easy, but agreeable. His custom was, to consider each evening as the close of life, the darkness of the night as the time of death, and his bed as his grave. He composed himself for the one, therefore, as he would have done for the other. On retiring to rest, he fell on his knees; confessed, and entreated pardon for the transgressions of the day; renewed his faith in the mercies of God through Christ; expressed in a prayer of intercession his charity towards all mankind; and then committed his soul into the hands of his Creator and Redeemer, as one who was to awake no more in this world. His sleep after this was perfectly sweet; the days added to his life were estimated as clear gain; and when the last came, it ended with as much tranquillity as all that had preceded. I would wish to recommend this example to your imitation. The practice will cost you some pains and trouble, perhaps, for a little while; but you will never have cause to repent that you be-



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stowed them; and I know of no better method whereby you can place yourselves in a state of constant security and comfort.

5. When we say that we have lost a friend, we can mean only, that we have lost him for a time. He is not finally perished; we shall see him again: and therefore it behoves us to consider what our sensations will be at the sight of him; which must always depend on our usage of him during his life. We shall see him with joy or grief, as we have formerly used him well or otherwise; and all that we have ever said or done relative to him will then be known. We are too apt to forget this circumstance; and seem to think that when they are dead with whom we have been concerned, no farther account will be taken of our behaviour towards them. Otherwise the consideration could not but have a great effect in the regulation of our conduct.

The case is exactly the same respecting the old year now departed. It is, indeed, as we have observed before, numbered among the dead; but like the dead, it will, in one sense, arise and appear to us again, and we shall be made to recollect the usage it received at our hands, while we were in possession of it upon earth. Memory will in that hour be quickened and perfected. Like a mirror holden before our eyes, it will represent faithfully to our minds the various transactions of the year in which we bore a part; and we shall be forced to recognise and acknowledge the thoughts, the words, and the actions which passed during its continuance with us. May we find

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pleasure in reviewing them!—But review them we must—and so must He who is to be our judge, at the day of his second manifestation. That day draws on apace. For not only friends die, and years expire, and we ourselves shall do the same, but the world itself approaches to its end. It likewise must die. Once already has it suffered a watery death: it is to be destroyed a second time by fire. A celebrated author, having in his writings followed it through all its changes from the creation to the consummation, describes the eruption of this fire and the progress it is to make, with the final and utter devastation to be effected by it, when all sublunary nature shall be overwhelmed and sunk in a molten deluge. In this situation of things he stands over the world, as if he had been the only survivor, and pronounces its funeral oration in a strain of sublimity scarce ever equalled by mere man.

"Let us reflect upon this occasion, on the vanity "and transient glory of this habitable world. How, "by the force of one element breaking loose upon the "rest, all the varieties of nature, all the works of "art, all the labours of men, are reduced to nothing! "All that we admired and adored before, as great "and magnificent, is obliterated or vanished; and "another form and face of things, plain, simple, and "every where the same, overspreads the whole earth. "Where are now the great empires of the world, "and their imperial cities? their pillars, trophies, "and monuments of glory? Show me where they "stood, read the inscription, tell me the conqueror's



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"name. What remains, what impressions, what "difference or distinction do you discern in the mass "of fire? Rome itself, eternal Rome, the great city, "the empress of the world, whose domination and "superstition, ancient and modern, make a large "part of the history of this earth; what is become "of her now? She laid her foundations deep, and "her palaces were strong and sumptuous; *she glo-* "*rified herself, and lived deliciously, and said in her* "*heart, I sit as a queen, and shall see no sorrow.* "But her hour is come, she is wiped away from the "face of the earth, and buried in everlasting oblivion. "But not cities only, and the works of men's hands— "the everlasting hills, the mountains and rocks are "melted as wax before the sun, and their place is no "where to be found. Here stood the Alps, the load "of the earth, that covered many countries, and "reached their arms from the Ocean to the Black "Sea: this huge mass of stone is softened and dis- "solved, as a tender cloud into rain. Here stood "the African mountains, and Atlas with his top "above the clouds; there was frozen Caucasus, "and Taurus, and Imaus, and the mountains of "Asia; and yonder, towards the north, stood the "Riphæan hills, clothed in ice and snow. All these "are vanished, dropped away as the snow upon their "heads!—Great and marvellous are thy works, "Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, "thou King of saints!"

Thus you see, "old things are passed away." But out of their ashes a new creation shall spring

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forth. According to the divine promise, which cannot fail, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwell righteousness, joy, and life, and from which, consequently, sin, sorrow, and death, are for ever excluded. We wait, in faith and patience, for the time when we ourselves shall be restored with the world, and "all things shall become new." To prepare for this glorious and unexpected time, let us be first "renewed in the spirit of our minds; let us "put off the old man, corrupt with the deceitful "lusts, and put on the new man, which of God is "created in righteousness and true holiness;" addressing ourselves, for the necessary strength and power, to him that sitteth on the throne, who saith from thence, "Behold, I make all things new." This done, we shall descend undismayed to the grave, and our flesh shall rest there in hope, like a grain of corn in its furrow, to appear in another and better form, at the appointed season, to begin an everlasting spring, and be for ever young. And when can we enter with so great propriety, upon the blessed work, as now, when a new year affords us opportunity to repair the miscarriages of the old one? —Let me leave in your ears, and upon your minds, the charming words of that kind and affectionate invitation, made in one of the sacred books, by the Redeemer to his church, who, you know, throughout the Scriptures is considered in the relation of his spouse:—

"Lo, the winter will soon be past; the rain will "be over and gone; the flowers will appear on the

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"earth; the time of the singing of birds will come;
"and the voice of the turtle will be heard in our land.
"The fig-tree will put forth her green figs, and the
"vines, with the tender grape, give a good smell.
"Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead,
"and Christ shall give thee light."

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# DISCOURSE XXIX.

## THE CHILDREN IN THE TEMPLE.

MATTHEW, XXI. 15, 16.

*And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased, and said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?*

THIS part of sacred story presents us with a very extraordinary scene. Messiah, the promised Saviour, prefigured by the law, foretold by the prophets, and universally expected to appear, appears accordingly. Exactly in the manner described by Zechariah, he makes his public entry, meek and lowly, into his capital city, Jerusalem. Agreeably to the celebrated passages in Malachi and Haggai, "The Lord, whom men sought, came to his temple," and by his personal presence rendered "the glory of "the latter house greater than the glory of the for-"mer." "He came to his own, but his own re-

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"ceived him not." The rulers of the then church would not acknowledge him: they were offended (it was but a natural consequence) with those who did so. The voices of children, proclaiming his titles, sounded harsh and grating in their ears; and they hinted by their question, that he himself ought to reprove, rebuke, and silence these little heralds of his praises. "Hearest thou what these say?"—as if they had spoken blasphemy. But mark the answer: "Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou "hast perfected praise?" In other words, "You "are ignorant of your own Scriptures; at least you "do not recollect what is written in the eighth "psalm; that when God is to be glorified for his "works, and those who should do it will not do it, "he makes even children the instruments of sham-"ing and confounding the adversaries of his truth: "*out of the mouth of babes and sucklings* he *perfects* "*praise*," or, as it is in the original Hebrew, "*or-*"*dains, appoints, constitutes strength, to still the* "*enemy and the avenger*."

The proposition arising from the text is evidently this; that God is pleased to esteem himself honoured, when children are taught to confess and to praise his holy name. A few considerations shall be offered, touching the grounds and reasons of such proposition, whence an application will follow to the charity which this discourse is designed to recommend.

On hearing, that "out of the mouth of babes and "sucklings God ordains strength to still the enemy," the thought which first strikes us is that suggested in

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another passage of Scripture, wherein he says, "My "strength is made perfect in weakness." This is the circumstance which distinguishes the works of God from the works of man. When man has an end to accomplish, he must employ means originally and in themselves suited to that end. The materials and the persons who use them must be every way proper, and equal to the work. By him who is building a house, great preparations are made, plentiful stores of every thing necessary laid in, skilful and able artificers provided: and we know, beforehand, that by a due application of the causes, the effect may be produced. In the works of God it is otherwise. Means unlikely and improbable are chosen, persons weak and naturally unable selected, that the power may appear to be not in them, but in him. In this way he delights to show forth his glory through the whole creation. At the beginning, light shone out of darkness, order out of confusion, and all the beauty and fulness of the world which we behold arose from a chaos "with-"out form, and void." By a silent, unseen, mysterious process, the fairest flower of the garden springs from a small insignificant seed, the majestic oak of the forest from an acorn, the strongest and wisest man from a wretched, helpless, and senseless infant; the holy and exalted saint from a miserable sinner. A prophet, with great justness and propriety, styles this, "the *hiding* of the divine power." And thus, upon the same plan, when the Gospel was to be preached and the world saved, not a company of philosophers, or an army of heroes, but a few illiterate Jewish

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fishermen were sent forth to accomplish the mighty work. Hear with what force and energy St. Paul treats this point: "The foolishness of God is wiser "than men; and the weakness of God is stronger "than men. For you see your calling, how that not "many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, "not many noble, are called. But God hath chosen "the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; "and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, "to confound the things which are mighty; and base "things of the world, and things which are despised, "hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to "bring to nought things that are." Then follows the reason; "that no flesh should glory in his presence." The case of the children in the temple confounding by their hosannas the pride and malignity of the enemies of Christ, was, therefore, by no means single. It was upon the general scheme of the divine proceedings, as the power and skill of the artist are always proportionably manifested by the meanness and weakness of the instruments employed to effect his purpose.

But, *secondly*, God is still farther honoured when children are taught to confess and proclaim his truths, because hereby it is shown that his truths are such as children may confess and proclaim. All may receive the saving doctrines of our religion, and learn its wholesome precepts. Over the door of the school of the celebrated Plato, we are told, was written a sentence, importing, that no one must presume to enter there who had not first studied and rendered himself master of geometry. No such requisition is made by our blessed Master of those who mean to

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enter themselves in the number of his scholars. In other respects, learned or unlearned, wise or unwise, noble or ignoble, great or small, young or old, come who will, and he shall be instructed in all things necessary for him to learn, in order to his salvation; in a day, in an hour, he shall know more than the sages of antiquity were able to discover, from the dispersion of the nations at Babel to the coming of Christ, or would have discovered, from thence to the consummation of all things. This is a very wonderful consideration; and we must dwell a little upon it, for the honour and praise of revelation, and of that Being who vouchsafed it to man.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and "the earth." A child easily repeats and understands these few words of Moses. But the child who does so is at once in possession of a truth, which Heathen philosophy, for ages and generations, sought in vain; none could then with any degree of certainty determine by whom the world was made; whether it were made at all; whether there were many Gods, or one.

If the world were made by a good and gracious God, whence came so much evil as we all see and know to be in it? Here the wisdom of paganism was for ever at a stand. Bewildered and lost in its reasonings and guesses upon the subject, it soon came to question whether God were indeed good and gracious, or whether there could be any God who governed such a world. Let these men listen to a child nurtured in the Christian Scriptures. "By one man's "disobedience sin entered into the world, and death

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"by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that "all have sinned." What plainer or farther information can be desired?

Mankind have always found themselves tempted and carried on by their lusts and passions to offend God, by transgressing that law (whatever it might be) under which they lived. But who among them could tell the means by which they were to be reconciled to the offended Deity? Not one. Infinite were the devices and fancies of superstition to effect such reconciliation; but all in vain. It must have been dropped, and "let alone for ever," by them; whereas, every child with us knows, that "Christ has ap-"peared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, "and is become the author of salvation to all who "believe in him, and walk according to that be-"lief."

At a certain time we die. Our bodies are laid in the earth, and moulder to dust. And what is to befall them afterwards? Where is the wise man of the world that can give us instruction and assurance on this point? "Son of man can these dry bones live?" —is a question not to be answered out of the Christian school. *In* that school any child can answer it. "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the "first fruits of them that sleep. For as by man "came death, by man came also the resurrection of "the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in "Christ shall all be made alive.—The hour is com-"ing in which all that are in their graves shall hear "his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done "good, to the resurrection of life; and they that

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" have done evil, to the resurrection of condemna-
" tion."—" Had Jesus Christ delivered no other de-
" claration than this last," says an excellent writer,
" he had pronounced a message of inestimable im-
" portance, and well worthy of that splendid appara-
" tus of prophecy and miracles with which his mission
" was introduced and attested: a message in which
" the wisest of mankind would rejoice to find an an-
" swer to their doubts, and rest to their inquiries."
The observation is just and noble. And yet, such a message one of the Heathen sages, were he now living, might receive by the first child he met in the street.

In this manner, to silence false philosophy and pretended wisdom, has God "ordained strength out of
" the mouth of babes and sucklings," while by them are acknowledged and proclaimed the most concerning truths, which none of the philosophers of Greece and Rome could discover; the creation and redemption of the world; the origin and abolition of evil; the resurrection of the dead; and the final judgement. These were the points in which mankind long wanted and wished to be informed. Yet many have been the scoffs and sneers thrown out by unbelievers against the Gospel, as being the religion of women and children. Never surely was wit worse employed. For if the religion be in itself true and excellent, it can receive no prejudice from the circumstance of being embraced and cultivated by women and children. Just the contrary; since, if God ever vouchsafed a religion to the world, it must be adapted to either sex, and to every age. Christianity is that religion, and glories in being so.

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Thirdly, there is in the temper and disposition of children something peculiarly acceptable to God our Saviour. "They brought young children to Christ, "that he should touch them. His disciples rebuked "those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, "he was much displeased, and said unto them, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid "them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven. "Verily I say unto you, if any man shall not receive "the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not "enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, "put his hands upon them, and blessed them." Children, then, are capable of benefit by Christ; they are capable of his blessing on earth, and his presence in heaven; subjects of his kingdom under grace, and heirs of his kingdom in glory. The best office, therefore, we can perform for them, is to be the means of bringing them to the knowledge of him, that they may be partakers of these benefits, and so glorify their Father which is in heaven. He is pleased when we are thus employed. Nay, he sets these children before us, as little patterns and models of what, in heart and mind, we ourselves ought to be. Men, if they think of entering into his kingdom, must be converted, and become as little children, without pride, without wrath, without lust, without avarice, without ambition, without prejudice, without guile, open and teachable, all innocence, simplicity, sincerity. These tempers of little children constitute the ornaments of religion; and charming it is to behold them displayed in the life of a child of God! "The "wisdom that is from above," says St. James, as if

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this very subject had been in his eye, "is first pure, "then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, "full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, "and without hypocrisy." View the furious Saul, breathing out threatenings and slaughters, exceedingly mad against the disciples of Jesus, and persecuting them even to strange cities; till suddenly humbled to the dust by a light and a voice from heaven, you hear him, with all the meekness of an infant, exclaiming, "Lord what wouldest thou have me to do?" Many are the changes of this kind that have been wrought, and many in every age will be wrought, through the power of the Gospel. By it, in various ways, men are conformed to its temper and spirit; for a due and proper notion of that temper and spirit, Christ refers us to the state of childhood; a state through which, to sanctify it for all, himself did not disdain to pass; and in that, as in every other state, glorified the Father who sent him. Why, therefore, should it be thought a thing incredible, that "out of "the mouth of babes and sucklings God should or-"dain strength, and perfect praise?"

Lastly, God is honoured, wherever children are taught to confess and to praise his holy name, because it appears that his religion is there known and propagated. The circumstance is a proof that the country where it has taken place is a Christian country, and a pledge that it will continue to be such.

Under all the divine dispensations from the beginning, no duty is set higher, or more insisted on, than that of instructing children in the knowledge of religion. "Abraham shall surely become a great and

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"mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall "be blessed in him." What more, or greater, can be said of any mere man? Attend to the reason, which immediately follows: "For I know him, that "he will command his children after him, and they "shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice "and judgement; that the Lord may bring upon "Abraham that which he hath spoken of him[a]."

Thus, again, under the law: "These words, which "I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart." For what purpose, or for whose sake? Of themselves alone? By no means:—"And thou shalt teach "them diligently to thy children, and shalt talk of "them when thou sittest in thine house, and when "thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest "down, and when thou risest up[b]." Children, on their part, are supposed to be often asking questions upon these subjects, and so to put their parents, teachers, or friends, upon conversation of this kind. "And it shall come to pass, when your children "shall say unto you, What mean you by this ser-"vice? that you shall say, It is the sacrifice of the "Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of "the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the "Egyptians, and delivered our houses[c]."

Respecting Christian parents, they are most expressly enjoined to "bring their children up in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord;" and to the praise of young Timothy, as well as of those relations who had been his instructors, it is said, "that

[a] Gen. xviii. 18. [b] Deut. vi. 6. [c] Exod. xii. 26.

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"from a child he had known the holy Scriptures, "able to make him wise unto salvation, through "faith which is in Christ Jesus."

Considering these precepts and examples, who could believe he was travelling through a Christian country, when he found the children in it speaking and acting like Heathens; or, perhaps, in a manner that would disgrace Heathens?

But suppose no such precepts or examples had been recorded. Religion is not only truth; it is truth the most interesting, the most dear and valuable. It is that on which a man depends for his comfort and joy; for his safe conduct through this life, and his eternal happiness in the next. Would he deprive his children of this comfort, this joy, this safe conduct, this eternal happiness? Would he suffer them to live and die in error and vice, if it were in his power to prevent it? Can he bear the thought of seeing them at the last great day, standing, with the reprobates of all ages, at the *left* hand, and departing into never-ending misery? The wretched, ignorant idolater, who, in old time, made his children pass through the fire to Moloch, is less to be blamed than such a parent as this.

Should there, however, be a Christian country found in which the children are as above described, of one thing we may be abundantly certain, that such a country can not long continue Christian. They who are now children will, in a few years, become men and women; they will soon compose the great body of the public. Of what kind will that public be? and how much more depraved still will be the



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descendants of that public! In such a nation, matters must go on from bad to worse, till the wrath of God break forth, and there be no remedy. The inhabitants will either fall by the sword of the enemy, or be led away into captivity, or consumed by civil dissensions, biting and devouring one another. For wise and most important reasons therefore it was, that when "God established a testimony in Jacob, "and appointed a law in Israel, he commanded the "fathers that they should make them known to "their children; that the generation to come should "know them, even the children which should be "born; who should arise and declare them to their "children; that they might set their hope in God, "and not forget the works of God, but keep his com-"mandments[d]."

Had this divine injunction been obeyed, religious knowledge would have been regularly transmitted by parents to their children, from generation to generation. But that knowledge once lost (as from various causes it has been lost) by parents, ignorance must thenceforward be transmitted in the place of it. In the present state of things among us, many are the parents who can neither teach their children, nor afford to pay for their being taught. How melancholy, and in the end how fatal, to society must be the consequences, unless the cause be taken up by the charitable and well-disposed!—Blessed be God, it has been taken up by Britons, in a manner unknown to any other age or nation. At the yearly

[d] Psal. lxxviii. 5.

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meeting in the cathedral of the metropolis, 6000 poor children, neatly clothed in the uniform of their respective schools, are seen arranged in rising circles, and heard sounding forth together the praise of God. Struck with what they saw and heard (and I suppose the like never was seen or heard), two noblemen of the kingdom of Portugal, and consequently of the Romish persuasion, were overheard to exclaim, at one of these solemnities—"This is life in-"deed—We never lived before!"—"Out of the "mouth of babes and sucklings was praise thus per-"fected!"

Children clothed and instructed in other parts of the kingdom, cannot meet in this world; but all, if they make a proper use of what they learn, will meet in the next, to give thanks to God, and acknowledge the kindness of their benefactors. A more powerful consideration cannot be urged (and therefore no other needeth to be urged) to encourage all parties concerned in these charities, to perform their respective duties—those who have ability, to give liberally; those who teach, to do it with fidelity; those who learn, with diligence.



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# DISCOURSE XXX.

## CONSIDERATIONS ON THE SEA.

PSALM, XCV. 5.

*The sea is his, and he made it.*

WHEN man was first formed, creation was his book, and God his preceptor. The elements were so many letters, by means of which, when rightly understood and put together, the wisdom, power, and goodness of the great Creator became legible to him.

The proficiency made by Adam under his heavenly Teacher, appears from the circumstance of his imposing upon the creatures, when they were brought to him for that purpose, *names* expressive of their natures: a task which he could never have performed, unless, by the assistance of his divine Guide, he had first been introduced to an intimate acquaintance with those natures.

Happy the times when all knowledge thus lay in one volume; when the pursuit of wisdom was attended by pleasure, and followed by devotion! For who doth not find delight in contemplating the works of the Lord? Who, when he hath duly con-

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templated the works, can forbear to praise the Workmaster?

The great and learned champion of the Roman church, who spent the best part of his life in sifting the disputes between the catholics and protestants, composed, towards the close of his days, a small treatise upon the ascent of the soul to God by meditation on the creatures, which, from thenceforth, he made his constant companion, and was wont to say, it was more satisfaction to him to have been the author of that, than of all his large volumes of controversy.

The raptures with which the penmen of the holy Scriptures expatiate upon the perfections of God, as displayed in the creation, are well known. And could we bring our minds habitually into the same train of thinking, every walk we take would begin with admiration, and end with praise. We should always, upon such occasions, *think* what the Psalmist has so finely *expressed*, after a survey of the heavens above and the earth beneath—"O Lord, how "manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made "them all: the earth is full of thy riches!" And who, that looks around him from the delightful place where we now are[a], can forbear to add, "So is "this great and wide sea also!" For of this truth let us never be unmindful, that wonderful as the sea is in itself, and beneficial as it is to the sons of men, all its wonders and all its benefits reflect glory and honour on him who formed and poured it abroad—

[a] This Discourse was composed at *Brighthelmstone.*

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Let us remember, that "The sea is his, and he "made it."

Such an object, continually before our eyes, invites and demands our attention; and religion calls upon us to search out the riches of divine power and goodness contained in it.

When we place ourselves upon the shore, and from thence behold that immense body of waters, stretching away on all sides, far as the eye can reach; and when we consider how large a portion of the globe is covered in like manner; what a noble idea are we hereby enabled to form of the immensity of that Being, who, in the emphatical language of Scripture, is said not only to "weigh the mountain "in a balance," but to "take up the sea in the hol-"low of his hand!" in whose sight the hills are but as dust, the ocean is no more than a drop. The immeasurable breadth of the sea may remind us of God's boundless mercy; its unfathomable depth holds forth an image of his unsearchable judgements.

When we see a mass of water rising up by a gradual ascent, till the sky seems, as it were, to descend and close upon it, a thought immediately strikes us —What is it which prevents these waters from breaking in upon, and overflowing the land, as they appear in heaps so much above it? Let us adore that unseen power, which, by a perpetual decree, keeps them in their proper place, nor suffers them to intrude themselves into one which is not theirs. It is God's will that it should be so: when he gives the word, "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no far-"ther," plain sand proves a sufficient barrier. The

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obedient waves bow themselves, and retire. They continue this day according to thine ordinance, O Lord, "for all things serve thee," but rebellious man, whom nothing can restrain from passing the bounds set him by thy commandments!

Hear attentively the *noise* of the sea—How grand and awful the sound! even as the voice of the Almighty God when he speaketh! St. John, in the Revelation, to give us some notion of the praises of God as uttered by men and angels, or the choirs of heaven and earth united before the throne, has chosen this similitude, joining two others with it; the creation does not afford a fourth—"I heard, as "it were, the voice of *much people* in heaven, and "the voice of *many waters*, and the voice of *mighty* "*thunderings*, saying Hallelujah!" And is not this what the waves always say,—"Praise the Lord"—praise him with your voices, as we constantly do with ours, while we thus intelligibly proclaim aloud the might of his power, and the glory of his majesty!

Pleasing is the variety of prospects which the sea, at different times, affords us. For, one while, like the conscience of a good man, calm and unruffled, it reflects a bright and beautiful image of the light which shineth upon it from above; at another, like the heart of the wicked, it is dark and cloudy, stormy and tempestuous, agitated from the very bottom, and its "restless waters cast up mire and dirt." Reflect, for a moment, on these two pictures of virtue and vice, and then doubt, if you can, to which of the originals your choice ought to be directed.

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To behold the ebbing and flowing of the tide, is an amusement ever new. By this contrivance of infinite wisdom (whatever second causes are employed to produce the effect) the whole mass of sea water is kept in continual motion, which, together with the salt contained in it, preserves it from corrupting (as it would do if stagnant) and poisoning the world. At one part of the day, therefore, the ocean seems to be leaving us, and going to other more favoured coasts; but at the stated period, as if it had only paused to recover itself, it returns again, by gradual advances, till it be arrived to its former height. There is an ebb and a flow in all human affairs; and a turn of events may render him happy who is now miserable: the vessel which is stranded may yet be borne up on the waters, may put out again to sea, and be blessed with a prosperous voyage.

Nor is the sea more wonderful in itself, than it is beneficial to mankind.

From its surface vapours are continually arising, drawn upwards by the heat of the sun, which, by degrees formed into clouds, drop fatness on our fields and gardens, causing even the wilderness to smile, and the valleys, covered over with corn, to laugh and sing. Thus the prayers of the faithful servants of God, daily ascending from all parts of the earth, return in large effusions of grace and blessing from heaven.

But we are indebted to the ocean not only for the vapours sent up from its surface, but likewise for many springs, which have their origin from the great deep beneath, with which the sea communicates.

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These, arising in vapour through the lower parts of the earth, break forth, and issue in streams, many of which joined form rivers, and so go back again to the place from whence they came; as the blood in the human body flows in streams from the heart, through the arteries, and returns to it again in rivers by the veins, which grow larger as they approach and are about to empty themselves into the great reservoir. In the greater as well as the lesser world, there is a constant circulation maintained; the income is proportioned to the expense, and nothing is wasted. "All rivers," saith Solomon, "run to the sea, "yet the sea is not full," or, does not overflow; "to "the place from whence the rivers come, thither do "they return again;" but not till, by their innumerable turnings and windings, they have refreshed and enriched large tracts of country in their passage. So divine grace springs up in the heart of a Christian man, as water doth in a fountain, supplied from an invisible and inexhaustible storehouse; it flows forth in his words and actions, doing good to all around it in its course, and is finally swallowed up and lost in the boundless ocean of infinite perfection.

Barren and desolate as the sea appears to those who only look upon it and search not into it, yet within its bosom are contained creatures, exceeding in number those that walk and creep upon the land; insomuch that in the sacred language they have their name from a word which signifies to multiply. The ingenuity and industry of man have found means to draw forth these inhabitants of the waters from their deepest recesses; and while they afford to some an

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agreeable variety of wholesome food, they support multitudes of others whose employment it is to procure them, an employment healthy, honest, carried on in peace and quietness, without tumult, noise, strife, and bloodshed, affording to those who are engaged in it continual opportunities of beholding "the "works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep." Persons of this occupation, men of plain sense and good hearts, were chosen by our blessed Lord to preach the word of life to the nations, to cast abroad the evangelical net, and to become, as he himself expresses it, "fishers of men."

By the invention of shipping, and the art of navigation, the sea is made in reality to join those nations which it appears to divide, the communication being often far more easy and expeditious by water than it would have been by land. The riches of both the Indies are wafted to our shores; we sit at home, and feast upon the productions of every country under heaven, while the superfluity of our own commodities is disposed of to advantage abroad. A friendly intercourse is opened between the most distant lands; savages are humanized, and become proficients in the arts and sciences; the Gospel is preached among them, and the light of truth made to shine upon those who sat in darkness and the shadow of death; they are taught the art of arts and the science of sciences, the art of holy living and the science of salvation. A large vessel, with all its conveniences, constructed in such a manner as to go upon the surface of the water, and to brave the fury of the winds and waves, is, perhaps, the master-

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piece of human contrivance; and the Psalmist, when contemplating the wonders of the ocean, cries out in admiration, as if placed in a situation like this of ours—" There go the ships."

But while we meditate upon the advantages accruing to mankind from a part of the creation which, at first sight, might seem incapable of affording any, let us not be unmindful of the circumstance which brings us now together, and gives occasion to this discourse. Let the medicinal powers and salutary virtues with which the Almighty hath endued the waters of the sea, be always had in remembrance by those who have happily experienced them; let praise and glory be rendered to the great Physician, who hath made the ocean a magnificent mineral bath, in which, as formerly in the pool of Bethesda, the weak become strong, and the sick whole. And when we behold the mighty works thus wrought for the bodies of men, let us reflect upon that sovereign mercy which in like manner strengthens the infirmities, and heals the diseases of our minds; and let us be equally diligent in using the means appointed to restore *them* to vigour and purity, that so thus doubly benefited and blessed, we may express the gratitude of our hearts in those divine words of David—" Praise the " Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me praise " his holy name. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and " forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thy sin, " and healeth all thine infirmities; who saveth thy life " from destruction, and crowneth thee with loving " kindness and mercy; who satisfieth thy mouth with

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"good things, so that thy life is renewed like the "eagle's."

The last use I shall mention which we are to make of the sea is that which the Holy Spirit himself hath so frequently made of it in the Scriptures, namely, to consider it as an emblem of the world and of what is passing therein. Under a smiling, deceitful surface, both conceal dangerous rocks and quicksands, on which the unskilful mariner will strike and be lost; both abound with creatures pursuing and devouring each other, the small and weak becoming a prey to the great and powerful; while in both there is a grand "destroyer, a Leviathan taking his pastime," and seeking the perdition of all. In the voyage of life, we may set out with a still sea and a fair sky; but, ere long, cares and sorrows, troubles and afflictions, overtake us. At God's word, either to punish us or to prove us, from some quarter or other, whence, perhaps, we least expected it, the stormy wind ariseth, and lifteth up the waves; we are carried sometimes up to heaven with hope, sometimes down to the deep with despair, and our soul melteth because of trouble. Then it is that our heavenly Father shows us what poor helpless creatures we are without him; and tribulation becomes the parent of devotion. If we cry unto the Lord in our trouble, he will deliver us out of our distress; if, with the disciples in the Gospel, we go to our Master, saying, "Lord, save us, we perish," he will, as he did then, arise, and rebuke the winds and the sea; there will be a calm; and we shall arrive in safety at the desir-

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ed haven. Let us, therefore, conclude by beseeching Almighty God, in the words of our most excellent church, that we who by baptism were "received into "the ark of Christ's church, being steadfast in faith, "joyful through hope, and rooted in charity, may so "pass the waves of this troublesome world, that "finally we may come to the land of everlasting "life," where all the tossings and agitations of human affairs shall cease, or, as St. John expresses it, where there shall be "no more SEA."

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# DISCOURSE XXXI.

## THE BLESSING OF A CHEERFUL HEART.

PROVERBS, XVII. part of the 22d verse.

*A merry heart doeth good like a medicine.*

AMONG the golden maxims delivered out for the direction of our moral conduct, by him on whom it pleased God to bestow "largeness of heart as the "sand upon the sea shore," we meet with several in different parts of the book of Proverbs to the same effect with that which hath been just now read.— "Heaviness in the heart of a man maketh it stoop; "but a good word maketh it glad. A merry heart "maketh a cheerful countenance; but by sorrow of "the heart the spirit is broken. All the days of the "afflicted are evil; but he that is of a merry heart "hath a continual feast. A merry heart doeth good "like a medicine; but a broken spirit drieth the "bones." To these passages may be subjoined a very fine one from the book of Ecclesiasticus, written in the spirit and style of Solomon—"Give not over "thy mind to heaviness, and afflict not thyself in "thine own counsel. The gladness of the heart is "the life of man, and the joyfulness of a man pro-

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"longeth his days. Love thine own soul, and com-
"fort thine heart; remove sorrow far from thee:
"for sorrow hath killed many, and there is no pro-
"fit therein. Envy and wrath shorten the life, and
"carefulness bringeth age before the time[a]."

It is evidently intended in these sentences to discountenance a gloomy discontented cast of mind, and to recommend in its stead that habit of being pleased ourselves, and of pleasing others, which is best expressed in English by the word *cheerfulness:* I say *habit*, because herein it stands distinguished from those transient flashes of merriment which are often succeeded by an answerable depression of spirits, and are therefore by our author, in another place, compared to "the crackling of thorns under a pot;" they blaze for a moment, and expire for ever; whereas cheerfulness is even and constant; though it blaze less, it warms more, and has been very properly called the sunshine of life.

The obligations we lie under to cultivate this happy temper of mind affect us, some, as we are *men;* others, as we are *Christians.*

The first argument in favour of cheerfulness shall be drawn from the eminent service it is capable of rendering to the *body.* What powers the soul will possess, or how she will exert them in a separate state, we cannot tell. During her union with the body, she makes use of it as an instrument, and is therefore much concerned to keep it in order, that her own operations may not be impeded. To do this, she cannot take a more effectual way than to

[a] Ecclus. xxx. 21.

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establish and preserve in herself a cheerful disposition. The influence which the mind hath upon the body is well known; insomuch that the writers upon health and long life never fail to take the *passions* into consideration; of which they tell us, that the more sudden and violent ones produce acute diseases, and the slow and lasting ones those which are styled chronical. Among these latter it is certain that no one is more prejudicial to the health of the body than grief, when long indulged and settled into a habit, whatever may have been its cause, great or little, real or imaginary. It contracts and enfeebles the animal spirits, preys upon the strength, and eats out the vigour of the constitution; the radical moisture is consumed, and the unhappy subject of this passion droops like a flower in the scorching heat of summer. "A "broken spirit," says Solomon, in the words following those of the text, "drieth the bones;" and, what is worst of all, it prevents the good effects of those medicines which it renders necessary. On the other hand, a cheerful disposition of mind always seconds the endeavours of the physician for the service of the body, and will do half the work in the cure of a distemper; it dilates and invigorates the animal spirits, quickens the fluids, repairs the solids, and maketh the bones fat. Such extensive influence in the little world of man, as well as in the larger one of creation, do the superior parts exert upon those which are inferior. Let "the heavens rejoice," and "the "earth will be glad." He, therefore, who would enjoy health while he lives, and live long to enjoy it, must learn to be cheerful.

Nor, secondly, does cheerfulness bear an aspect

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less friendly on the *mind* itself, which by melancholy is dejected and broken, and becomes unfit for the performance of its functions. Under the dominion of such a temper, a man finds himself unable to bear up against the evils of life, or to taste its blessings, poured in ever so great a profusion around him; he cannot be a partaker of the light which shineth upon others, but walketh on still in darkness. "All his "days are evil." The duties of his station are unperformed; he can neither be of service to his brethren, nor help himself. His judgement is perplexed and confounded; it is difficult for him to make a resolution, and still more so to keep it. His imagination is haunted with fears and terrors; his memory serves only to recall the ideas which feed and increase the disorder; and he becomes a burthen to himself and to his friends. But how grievous and pitiable a case is this! Perhaps there are few cases more so in the world. Losses and calamities, pain and sickness, may be, and often are, supported, without any great difficulty or inconvenience, by a sound and vigorous mind; but when the supporter itself falls and covers the ground with its ruins, then the desolation is complete. "The spirit of a man can sustain his in-"firmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?" Would we then avoid so sad a catastrophe? we must shun the steps that lead to it. Would we be easy in our thoughts, and masters of ourselves; would we escape from the tyranny of the most pernicious of passions; would we possess a clear imagination, an undisturbed judgement, and an unruffled temper; would we perform all the social offices with alacrity



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and pleasure; would we relish the comforts of life, and not feel the weight of its troubles; would we, in a word, enjoy serenity and complacency of mind ourselves, and diffuse them around us wherever we go? All these are the privileges of cheerfulness, and unanswerable reasons why we should cultivate that disposition in our own hearts, and press the necessity of so doing on all our acquaintance.

A third argument in favour of cheerfulness may be deduced from a survey of the *world* in which we live, and in which we find things framed not only for necessity but pleasure, not only for use but beauty. The lights which God hath "set in the firmament of "heaven, to divide the day from the night, to be for "signs and for seasons, for days and for years," while they answer all those purposes according to his ordinance, do, at the same time, cheer and delight us by their splendid appearance. The blossoms of the spring, which serve to protect the infant fruit; the glories of summer, which mature and bring it to perfection; and the riches with which autumn overspreads the face of a country; contribute as much to the satisfaction of the beholder as they do to the husbandman's advantage. The same genial power which brings food out of the earth for the nourishment of the animals that walk upon it, arrays it in a colour the most agreeable and refreshing to the eye of man; and let any one who walks forth at the proper season of the year to contemplate the creation in its beauty, who beholds the brightness of the sun, the clearness of the sky, the verdure of the earth, well watered pastures clothed with flocks,

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valleys covered over with corn, and woods resounding with the music of birds; let such a one determine (to use the words of an elegant and pious writer upon the subject), "whether Providence designed "this world should be filled with murmurs and re-"pinings, or that the heart of man should be in-"volved in gloom and melancholy[b]." Certainly the Psalmist was of another opinion; whose description of the pleasing objects with which nature abounds may supply their absence, and make them present to our minds:—"He sendeth the springs into the val-"leys which run among the hills; they give drink to "every beast of the field; the wild asses quench "their thirst. By them shall the fowls of heaven "have their habitation, and sing among the branches. "He watereth the hills from his chambers; the "earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works. He "causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb "for the service of man, that he may bring forth "food out of the earth, and wine that maketh glad "the heart of man, and oil to make his face to "shine, and bread which strengthens man's heart." A survey of creation drove away all sadness from the heart of David, and filled it with admiration, joy, and gladness: "O Lord," says he, "how manifold "are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them "all: the earth is full of thy riches!—I will sing "unto the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise "unto my God while I have my being. My medi-"tation of him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the

[b] Spectator.



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"Lord." A resolution so just and well founded suggesteth to us a

Fourth argument on the behalf of a cheerful disposition of mind, as it is a duty we owe to our *Maker*, who hath placed us in a world thus stocked with objects capable of inspiring complacency and delight. For it was, doubtless, his intention, that by contemplating the beauties and glories of the creation, we might be led to make suitable returns of gratitude and thankfulness to the Creator. But gloom and melancholy will never suffer emotions like these to arise in a mind, of which they have taken possession. Such a temper, therefore, when it is become a fixed and settled one, appears not only to be to the last degree inconvenient and tormenting, but to have a manifest tincture of impiety. To receive the gifts of Heaven with a sour aspect and a sullen silence, what is it but to throw them back with disdain to the bountiful Donor, declaring that we will have none of them? It is the rebellious obstinacy of a wayward child, against the gracious offers of the most indulgent of Fathers. Whereas a cheerful state of mind, to use the words of the excellent writer before cited, is "a "constant, habitual gratitude to the great Author of "nature; an implicit praise and thanksgiving to Pro-"vidence under all its dispensations; a kind of ac-"quiescence in the state wherein we are placed, and "a secret approbation of the divine will in its con-"duct towards man. The cheerfulness of heart which "springs up in us from the survey of nature's works, "is an admirable preparation for gratitude. The "mind has gone a great way towards praise and

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"thanksgiving, that is filled with such a secret glad-
"ness. A grateful reflection on the supreme Cause
"who produces it, sanctifies it in the soul, and gives
"it its proper value; consecrates every field and
"wood, and turns an ordinary walk into a morning
"or evening sacrifice[c]."

Such are the obligations to cultivate a cheerful disposition which affect us as *men*, wishing to possess a sound *mind* in a healthful *body;* to taste the beauties and excellencies of the *world* in which we are placed; and to make a due return of gratitude and thankfulness to *God*, who placed us in it. Let us now consider the additional motives afforded us, as *Christians*, by the religion we profess.

The nature of that religion is sufficiently expressed by the term so often used to denote it. It is a communication of *good news*, which should be received, in this case, as in all others, with a joy proportionable to its importance; and as it is of the highest importance, should be therefore productive of the greatest joy. The patriarchs and prophets, who viewed afar off that wonderful event which hath since taken place, were affected by it in a very sensible and lively manner. "Your father Abraham," says our Lord to the Jews, "*rejoiced* to see my day; and he saw it, "and was *glad*." Isaiah is in raptures whenever he has occasion to touch upon the subject. "How "beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him "that bringeth good tidings!—Break forth into joy, "sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem; for the

[c] Spectator.

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"Lord hath comforted his people. Sing, O heavens, "for the Lord hath done it; shout, ye lower parts "of the earth; break forth into singing, ye moun-"tains, O forest, and every tree therein; for the "Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself "in Israel." When the predictions were accomplished, and the Divine Person who had been the subject of them made his appearance in the flesh, the heavenly messenger published the news in the following terms—"Behold, I bring you good tidings "of *great joy*, which shall be to all people." The Gospel was accordingly received by the first converts, on the day of Pentecost, "with gladness and single-"ness of heart." Into whatsoever city or country it came, "there was great joy in that place;" and the joy, we find, was such that it raised its possessors above the world, and triumphed over all afflictions. Of other things they were often despoiled; but "their "joy no man took from them." In every situation and condition, they did then what the apostle exhorts all Christians to do, they "rejoiced evermore."

Nor can we wonder that the Gospel should, in its name and nature, portend joy, when we reflect that its *end* was to deliver mankind from sorrow. Sorrow first entered into the world, as a necessary attendant on sin, which filled the minds of men with disquietude and anxiety, their bodies with diseases and pains. The Gospel removes the former by the pardon it holds forth, and enables us cheerfully to bear the latter by the grace it confers; God therefore represents himself in it, as "the God of love, and of "all consolation." Our Lord calls us to him, that

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he may "give us rest and refreshment;" that he may "wipe all tears from our eyes;" that we may "enter "into our Master's joy;" and that "our joy may be "full." For this purpose he has sent us a blessed "Comforter, to abide with us for ever," whose first fruits are, "love, joy, and peace;" a Spirit, cheerful in himself, and making those cheerful who are partakers of him; cheerful in trouble, cheerful out of trouble; cheerful while they live, cheerful when they die; cheerful in using well the blessings of this life, cheerful in expecting the blessedness of the next; cheerful through faith, while they believe in the great and precious promises made to them; cheerful through hope, which depends upon their accomplishment; cheerful through charity, in doing acts of mercy and loving kindness; till they come to that land of plenty, where none shall want; to those regions of joy, from whence sorrow shall be for ever excluded.

There is no occasion to be more particular upon this topic. It appears evidently, that whether we consider the name, the nature, or the end of the Gospel, its Author, its doctrines, its duties, or the Spirit which accompanies it; every way, it is a dispensation of love and peace, consolation and joy. So that a good Christian, of all men, has most cause to be cheerful. Some have gone so far as to affirm, that it is impious in such a one to be otherwise.

A celebrated writer on the side of scepticism and irreligion, in a book published since his death, to recommend atheism to the world has been pleased to say, that all the devout persons he had ever seen were melancholy. This might very possibly be; for,

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in the first place, it is most likely that he saw very few, his friends and acquaintance being of another sort; and secondly, the sight of *him* would make a devout person melancholy at any time.

But it may be said, How can these things be? Doth not the Gospel call us to repentance? And is not repentance attended by mourning? Are we not commanded to renounce the world, and to mortify the flesh; to abstain from jollity and pleasure; to deny ourselves, to fast, to watch, and to pray? How then can such a religion as this be a source of cheerfulness and joy?

It is most certainly true, that the Gospel calleth us to repentance; and it is equally true, that repentance is attended by mourning. But is this the fault of religion, or of the sinner? Of the sinner, surely, who by his conduct makes repentance necessary, and then is angry to find that it is not agreeable. Physic is seldom so; and he, who has contracted a disease, must submit to the remedy, if he would recover his health. But the fact is, that true penitents have never failed to declare, they felt a greater joy in the midst of their sorrow, through a comfortable sense of God's returning favour, than ever they did in the commission of their sin, which was sure to be followed, if it were not accompanied, by the stings and terrors of conscience.

As to the world and the flesh, jollity and pleasure, if we are commanded to renounce, to mortify, and to abstain from them, it is by way of friendly caution, lest they should endanger the health of our minds, and bring on a relapse. They are taken from us by

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the kind hand of our heavenly Father, that something more wholesome, and more truly delightful, may be communicated to us, and relished by us. "Be not "drunk with wine," says the apostle; "but be filled "with the Spirit." And he who makes the exchange can be no loser by it. In a word, there is infinitely more joy in subduing a passion, than there can be in gratifying it; and, if we are to be determined by experienced persons, who have fairly tried both, they tell us, the pleasures of sin are far inferior to those afforded even by the severest and most unpromising exercises of religion. The objection, therefore, when considered and answered, turns out (as all objections in the end do) to the advantage of the Gospel; which resembles a fine country in the spring season, where the very *hedges* are in bloom, and every *thorn* produces a flower. The joys of the world end in sorrow; but the sorrows of religion terminate in joy. "Blessed "are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted." And it is very observable, that our Lord enjoins his disciples not to appear abroad with a sour and gloomy countenance, but, in their converse with mankind, to preserve their usual cheerfulness, even at those seasons when they are exercising upon themselves any act of religious discipline: "When ye fast, be "not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for "they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto "men to fast. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint "thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear "not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which "is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, "shall reward thee openly."

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Such, then, are the motives for cultivating a cheerful disposition, which reason dictates to us as men, and religion prescribes to us as Christians. You would wish perhaps to know, by what means this happy temper may be acquired and preserved.

We have before had occasion to mention the influence which the mind hath on the body. It is necessary here to take notice of the influence which the body sometimes hath on the mind, and to observe that melancholy is not infrequently constitutional, taking its rise from some distemperature of the blood and juices. This has, perhaps a share in the production and increase of what is called *religious*, but should rather be called *irreligious*, melancholy, much oftener than is generally imagined. That the effect, therefore, may cease, the cause must be removed, and application must be made to the physician, rather than to the divine.

When this is not the case, but the disorder lies originally in the mind, many useful directions may be given for its removal. Three things more especially are to be avoided by him who would possess a cheerful spirit.

The first of these is *idleness*. The mind of man being an active and restless principle, must have some matter given it to work upon, or it will turn its force inward and prey upon itself. When grief proceeds from a *real* cause, and not from one that is imaginary, it admits of no remedy more expeditious and efficacious, than that of diverting the thoughts from the subject which occasioned it, by providing for them some other employment; as we are told of

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a famous Roman general who had lost his son, that he found a cure for his sorrow in the heat and hurry of war[d]. And it is obvious to observe, that the sedentary and inactive, they who are retired from business, or they who were never engaged in any, are the persons that suffer most by the incursions of melancholy, from which, they themselves will tell us, they have never failed to be relieved, as often as, by any extraordinary call, they have been roused from indolence and forced upon action. The malady which destroys so many constitutions, and makes such numbers miserable who have nothing else to make them so, is unknown to him whom necessity obliges to toil for his bread. With the sun he rises, full of life and vigour, to his appointed task; upon that his attention is engaged all day, and the performance of it secures to him an uninterrupted repose at night, according to Solomon's observation, "The sleep of a *labouring* man is sweet." From all which we may venture to conclude, that happiness consists in employment, and that to be idle is to be wretched.

A second thing to be avoided is *guilt*. We must not only be employed, but we must be well employed. To every station Providence has annexed its proper offices and duties. We shall always find the discharge of these to be one source of cheerfulness, and the consciousness of having discharged them will

[d] Agricola—"In luctu bellum inter remedia erat." Tacit. in Vitâ. See the first lines of a Poem styled the Library, printed for Dodsley, 1781.

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always furnish us with another. They are pleasant not only in the act, but in the remembrance. They are labours which will have their reward from the hand of our Master in heaven. They are labours which will end in rest eternal, and will make that rest to be sweet indeed. But what title can that man have to cheerfulness, who has done those things only which he ought not to have done? Guilt and cheerfulness cannot dwell under the same roof. It is not fit they should. The consequence of guilt unrepented and unexpiated, is the wrath of God. And he on whom the wrath of God abideth, has no reason to be cheerful. It is folly, it is madness in him to be so, as it must argue an utter ignorance and insensibility of his condition. The Psalmist tells us, that "light is sown for the righteous, and "gladness for the upright in heart;" and therefore he adds—"Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous, and "give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness."

A third thing to be avoided, as capable of for ever excluding cheerfulness from the breast in which it has fixed its residence, is *infidelity*. Take from man the expectation of another world, and you render him at once the most miserable creature in this, as having, by his superior ingenuity, contrived for himself a great variety of racks and tortures to which all other animals are strangers. Present cares and present calamities would fall heavy upon us indeed, were they not sweetened and alleviated by the prospect of future joys. So delightful did the glimpse of such a prospect appear to the great Roman ora-

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tor, that he declared, if it were a delusion, he desired and had determined to live and die under it[c]. Who among us could be cheerful, while he entertained the thought of either not being at all after death, which must be the atheist's lot if his system be true; or of being for ever miserable, which will be his case if his system should be false? On a person of this cast it should seem needless to inflict any other punishment, than that of leaving him to the horrors of his gloomy imagination, till he feel himself to want those joys and comforts of which he hath laboured to deprive others.

Upon the whole, may it not be questioned, whether there be not some degree of infidelity at the bottom of most of that anxiety and disquietude which is so much complained of under the sun? For why do we grieve and lament that things are as they are? Why do we murmur and repine at what has happened? Why do we muse and disturb ourselves about what may happen? Is it not all for want of faith? Did we but attend to the instructions of this heavenly guide, she would teach us, that it is God who governs the world; that he governs it in wisdom and righteousness, and that therefore it is but reasonable we should leave the government of it to him; that he who hath showed his love towards us in the greatest instance of all, will not withhold it in others; that he who hath given his Son to die for us, will not deny us any thing which will contribute to our real welfare; and that we may safely cast all our

[c] Cicero de Senectute, ad fin.

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care upon him, who will make all things in the end work together for good to them that trust in him. These considerations, were they but rendered habitual to our minds, and ready for constant use and application, would brighten the darkest scenes of human life, and cause solitude and despondency to fly away. Religion would then gain by its professors that credit and honour which it deserves; and the designs of Heaven would be fully answered, which most undoubtedly were, that innocence and cheerfulness should go together, and the best Christian be the happiest man.

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*The Verses referred to in page 555, from a Poem styled* THE LIBRARY.

When the sad soul, by care and grief opprest,
Looks round the world, but looks in vain for rest;
When every object that appears in view
Partakes her gloom, and seems afflicted too;
Where shall affliction from itself retire?
Where fade away, and placidly expire?
Alas! we fly to silent scenes in vain,
Care blasts the honours of the flow'ry plain,
He veils in clouds the sun's meridian beam,
Sighs through the grove, and murmurs in the stream;
For when the soul is labouring in despair,
In vain the body breathes a purer air;
Nor storm-tost sailor sighs for *slumbering* seas,
He dreads the tempest, but invokes the *breeze;*
Oh the smooth mirror of the deep resides
Reflected woe, and o'er unruffled tides
The ghost of every former danger glides.
Thus in the calms of life we only see
A steadier image of our misery:

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But lively gales, and gently-clouded skies,
Disperse the sad reflections as they rise;
And busy thoughts, and little cares, prevail,
To ease the mind, when rest and reason fail.
When the dull thought, by no design employ'd,
Dwells on the past, or suffer'd or enjoy'd,
We bleed anew in ev'ry former grief,
And joys departed furnish no relief.

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# DISCOURSE XXXII.

## THE DUTY OF PRAYING FOR GOVERNORS.

1 Timothy ii. 1, 2.

*I exhort that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.*

An exhortation from an apostle always merits attention; but more especially, when he himself assures us, that the subject of it is not of an inferior or secondary nature. "I exhort that, first of all"—The person exhorting is St. Paul; the duty to which he exhorts is a capital and leading article. It is the duty of intercession to be made by all men for all men, to manifest the love we bear for one another, as members of Him who, at the right hand of God, ever liveth to make intercession for the whole race of mankind. Our prayers are united with his, and by him offered to the Father; his merits, like the cloud of sweet incense from the altar, ascending with them to render them effectual. Effectual, in some man-

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ner, they must be, when rightly made; otherwise we should not have been exhorted to make them. The salutary influence produced on our own minds by a performance of the duty, has been sometimes assigned as the only reason for its being enjoined. That influence is great and salutary indeed, seeing it is impossible we should long bear ill-will to those, whom in our prayers we beseech God to bless with every kind of blessing in time and eternity. It is an excellent method, therefore, of softening the temper, and inducing a mild, merciful, and forgiving disposition in the person interceding. But to say that no benefit accrues to the person or persons for whom intercession is made, what is it but to contradict the whole tenour of Scripture, which shows us in so many instances the regard vouchsafed by Heaven to the prayers of men, and the favours granted in consequence of them? It is necessary for us to settle ourselves firmly in the belief of this point, because no man will persevere in doing that which he apprehends himself to do to no purpose. As to the manner in which the Divine Being orders and adjusts his various dispensations, we can no more comprehend it, than a fly on one of the columns of the building in which we are now assembled, can comprehend the magnificence of the whole, or the proportion of the several parts. He will certainly perform that which he has promised: how he will perform it is a consideration which belongs to him, and not to us. Proceed we, therefore, to the immediate subject of the day, namely, the duty of making intercession for kings, and for all that are in authority. The reasons



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on which this duty is founded shall be considered, as they respect God; as they respect those who govern; and as they respect those who are governed.

I. As they respect God, it would indeed be sufficient that he has enjoined the duty, even though we could assign no other reason. There is no danger lest He should be too absolute. Whenever he commands, we have nothing to do but to obey; and we shall always find our account in it. "This"—says the apostle in the words immediately following the words of the text—"This is good and acceptable in "the sight of God our Saviour;" of God who is our Saviour, or, of our Saviour who is God; for it holds either way. But what are we, sinful men, thy unworthy servants, O Lord, that we should be sufficient to do any thing that is good and acceptable in thy sight? What are we, if, when thou art graciously pleased to say so, we should either refuse or neglect to do it?

But there is a very obvious reason why this is deemed good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour. It is an acknowledgement of his providence, his power, and his goodness: of his providence, as superintending and directing the affairs of men; of his power, as being able to protect, preserve, and prosper those for whom our prayers are preferred; and of his goodness, as being willing so to protect, to preserve, and to prosper them. What the act of intercession thus implies, is expressed, with wonderful sublimity, in the daily collect for the king, when we style God, "our Lord and heavenly "Father, high and mighty, King of kings, Lord of

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"lords, the only Ruler of princes, who does from his "throne behold all the dwellers upon earth;" and therefore "beseech him with his favour to behold "our most gracious sovereign lord," who reigns over us. This is a noble confession of the unlimited extent, the undoubted superiority of Divine Providence; a powerful argument for confidence that we shall obtain the petitions we ask; and as powerful an argument against impeding the success of our prayers, by sinning at any time in his presence, "who from his throne does thus behold all the "dwellers upon earth." If God be on our right hand, we should suffer ourselves to be neither seduced nor terrified.

There is yet another consideration to be urged in the case before us. When we entreat the Almighty, that he would protect and preserve government amongst us, we entreat him to protect and preserve that which is his own appointment, and by all good and conscientious men is to be obeyed as such. All power is originally and essentially in God, from him it descends to man. Pontius Pilate, about to pass sentence on the innocent Jesus, was not making a due use of his power; but even then, that power was by the innocent Jesus recognised and allowed: "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, "except it were given thee from above." Accordingly by our apostle we are told, "There is no "power but of God; the powers that be"—the powers subsisting—"are ordained of God." So far as relates to the different modes by which, in different constitutions, rulers become invested with



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their power—so far government is, what St. Peter styles it, "an ordinance of man," regulated by human laws. But when, by rulers becoming so invested, government commences and is in force, it must be submitted to "for the Lord's sake;" not only through fear of punishment, but because God, who is the Great King over all the earth, has commanded us, for the peace of the world, and the comfort of society, to consider our governors as armed with his authority, and to be subject to them as to himself. Resistance to them will be accounted as resistance to him.

These are the plain and simple politics of the Bible; easily understood, but, like many other duties, when we are aggrieved or fancy ourselves to be aggrieved, not so easily practised. The bias of human nature, in its present state, does not draw towards obedience. A late historian, who believed equally in the Bible and the Alcoran, has observed, that no harm can arise from the circumstance of this doctrine being preached by the ministers of the Gospel; because whenever the proper time for rebellion in any nation comes, the people will always find it out without being told: the only danger is, lest they should rebel too soon, before that time arrive. We give him credit for the observation; nothing can be more certain. Let not the most sanguine advocate for liberty, who dreams constantly of the subversion of the constitution, and in the visions of the night beholds his prince becoming absolute, and preparing to ruin and murder all his subjects—let not such a one, I say, be under any apprehensions that all the

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preaching in the church will prevent faction in the state: there will always be found a sufficient proportion of it: nor let any man be offended if we now repeat our position, that the consideration of government being God's appointment, affords a very solid reason why "prayers, supplications, intercessions, "and giving of thanks, should be made for kings, "and for all that are in authority."

II. Other reasons will offer themselves respecting rulers, and the situation in which they are placed.

If we are to make intercession, we are to make it chiefly for those who stand most in need of it, for those who in this life have the largest share of temptations and of troubles.

Now, who upon earth is exposed to so many and powerful temptations as a king? Has he a propensity to the pleasures of sense? They are all at his command; they stand around him, only waiting for his call to return answer, "Here we are." Has avarice taken possession of his breast? It may be gratified by amassing treasures, instead of expending them in generous and noble donations. Is he disposed to pride? He has every thing the world can furnish to puff him up. Does ambition fire him to aggrandize himself at the expense of his neighbours; to seize that to which he has no right; to desolate whole countries, and deluge them with the blood of the inhabitants? The instruments of destruction are prepared; fleets and armies move when the word is given. In short, does either appetite or passion at any time excite him to do that which he ought not to

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do? The means are at hand; and there are always those who will flatter and encourage him in following his inclinations.

But suppose him manfully to resist these temptations; and now let us view that sea of troubles which threatens to overwhelm him in the discharge of his office. He must feel, day and night, the weight of that office, the various duties to be performed, and the difficulty, nay, almost impossibility of performing them all, in any tolerable manner. Deceived by others in matters concerning which he cannot inform himself, or see them with his own eyes, he finds he has done wrong when his whole intention was to do right; and perhaps bestowed his favours on worthlessness and profligacy, when he designed to reward virtue and merit. Exposed continually to the shock of parties contending, ostensibly, for the public good, but, in reality, for places of honour and emolument, he knows not, at length, whom to trust or employ; nor must he trust and employ those whom he would wish to trust and employ, but is often under the necessity of discarding men whom he loves, and taking to his bosom men whom he cannot love. In the mean time, a set of libertine, unprincipled writers in prose and verse are ready to exhibit him to his people as a monster, to misrepresent and traduce his best actions, to aggravate his errors, and treat him in a manner in which he himself would disdain to treat the beggar at his gate.—Is a person thus circumstanced an object of envy? No;—if there be any bowels of love and

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mercy, pity and pray for him, that God would grant him patience in suffering evil, and perseverance in doing good, to the end of his days.

This all of us may do; and this is all that most of us can do. By intercession with Heaven there is a communion opened of the greatest with the least; and to the prayers of the meanest and remotest subject of the empire, who knows him only by name when he prays for him, may the sovereign stand indebted for some part of the favour and prosperity vouchsafed him, who needs the prayers of his people, because the cares and the toils of business will often scarcely allow him time and composure of mind to pray for himself.

III. But it is not only a regard to our rulers which suggests reasons why we should pray for them. A regard to ourselves should operate no less. Our own interest is deeply concerned. "I exhort that "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of "thanks, be made for kings, and for all that are in "authority"—Why?—"That we may lead a quiet "and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty;" "a quiet and peaceable life," as citizens; "in all "godliness and honesty," as Christians.

"A quiet and peaceable life!"—What a blessing! involving in it all other blessings. Without quiet and peace, what can we pursue with pleasure, or enjoy with comfort? The Scriptures paint it under the lovely and affecting image of "every man sitting un- "der his own vine, and under his own fig-tree"— "Sitting"—a posture of perfect ease and security— "under his own vine"—something that he can call

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his own, guarded and ensured to him by the laws and government of his country. Without laws, and government to carry those laws into execution, there would be nothing that he could call his own. His next neighbour, who had a mind for it and was stronger than he, must have it, and with it the life of the proprietor offering to defend it. The weak must be a prey to the strong, and the honest man be ruined by the villain, without redress or remedy. We of this nation (blessed be our God for it!) know not what it is to see government overturned by war from abroad, or insurrection at home. For years together have we been enabled to sit composedly in our habitations, and read accounts of what other countries have suffered in this way. Warm and comfortable within, we have heard the storm rage and howl around us without, waiting only for the return of a clear sky and the sun, to open our doors, and go forth again. This has rendered us insensible of the felicity we enjoy, because we have never been deprived of it; and men are ready in the wantonness of their folly, upon every trifling occasion, while serving the interests of themselves and their friends, to shake the foundations of the government under which they live, never reflecting on the calamities which must light upon all, were the fabric to fall in the contest. But the States of America can tell what they have suffered: the States of Holland can tell what they expected to suffer: the inhabitants in some parts of a neighbouring kingdom can inform us (in the midst of a civilized and enlightened age) what it is to have the flesh torn from their bones, or be

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buried alive in the earth. Of these and other transactions we now sit and read (as was observed above) with perfect calmness. But suppose—God forbid the supposition should ever be realized; it is made that it never may be realized—Suppose, I say, they should come home to ourselves.

More than a century has passed, since this nation experienced the miseries of anarchy and confusion; when unhappy dissensions afforded opportunity for a crafty and ambitious upstart to murder the king, annihilate one house of parliament, and, having turned the members out of the other, walk unmolested to Whitehall with the key of it in his pocket. This was LIBERTY, planted by able and skilful hands, duly watered, and full blown! Great events from little causes! Who would have thought such an event could have happened, when the dispute first began? Who could believe it ever did happen, had we not incontrovertible evidence to prove it? Least of all, who would wish to see it, or any thing like it, happen again? Let not, then, the principles which produced it be adopted and disseminated amongst us: let not the governed be taught to esteem themselves superior to their governors; but let all be taught, as they fear "God," to "honour the king;" that is, to "honour the "king" because they "fear God," who has commanded them so to do. Our felicity depends on the safety of the prince, and the stability of government, which may fail, among other reasons, through our neglect to pray for them. Our ingratitude, ungodliness, and indevotion, as well as our other vices and crimes, may bring a blast on the designs of our rulers; and while we blame the

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king and his ministers, the fault may be entirely our own. "Let supplications, prayers, intercessions, and "giving of thanks, be made, therefore, for kings, "and all that are in authority, that we may lead a "quiet and peaceable life," as citizens; and that we may lead it "in all godliness and honesty," as Christians.

For if the state be disturbed, the church cannot remain in peace; among the blessings of which this is ever to be esteemed the greatest, that religion is then best cultivated, and made to flourish in a land. Its ministers enjoy leisure and opportunity to celebrate its solemn offices, to meditate upon it, to write upon it, to preach, and to publish books upon it for the edification of their people. Of all this what can be done in the midst of war and tumults, when priests and people are flying before their common enemies, or engaged in civil commotions against each other? The Israelitish monarch, driven by rebellion from his capital, and in danger of his life, is very affecting upon this circumstance. The remembrance of better times occurred to his mind; of times when he went in procession with the multitude, and led his subjects into the house of God, with the voice of praise and thanksgiving, among such as kept holy day. A comparison of his former happy with his then afflicted condition, almost broke his heart. "When I remember these things, I pour out my "soul in me." But faith came to his assistance, and bade him not despair the return of those happy times, when he should again visit the temple, in like manner as before. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?

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"and why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in "God, for I shall yet praise him for the help of his "countenance."

In a season of greater calamity and distress in our own country, this venerable cathedral, by the reformers of that period, was converted into a stable; and small indeed was the prospect of its ever being restored to its original use and beauty. But, by the divine mercy, we are now assembled in it, "with the voice "of joy and praise, to keep holy day." We have a church, and we have a king; and we must pray for the prosperity of the last, if we wish to retain the first. The levelling principle of the age extends throughout. A republic, the darling idol of many amongst us, would probably, as the taste now inclines, come attended by a religion without bishop, priest, or deacon; without service or sacraments; without a Saviour to justify or a Spirit to sanctify; in short, a classical religion without adoration.

The external part of religion is, doubtless, of little value, in comparison with the internal; and so is the cask, in comparison with the wine contained in it: but if the cask be staved, the wine must perish. If there were no Sundays or holy days, no ministers, no churches or religious assemblies, no prayers or sacraments, no Scriptures read or sermons preached, how long would there be any religion left in the world? and who would desire to live in a world where there was none? It is to enable the ministers of Christ to perform all these their functions for the benefit of mankind, in peace and quietness, with due decency and dignity, that kings are by divine ap-

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pointment constituted "nursing fathers" of the church, "and queens its nursing mothers;" nor is it more their duty, than it is their interest, to become such.

The church, it may be said, can subsist without the state, or under oppression and persecution from it. True: the Christian church so subsisted for three hundred years; but, in the mean time, its members of all denominations were sought out, and put to death with all the variety of tortures, which the ingenuity of men, actuated by the malignity of evil spirits, could devise. If it should ever seem good to God to bring us into a similar condition, he would, we trust, prepare us to endure it; but neither clergy nor laity, it is presumed, can regard such a condition as a desirable one. The Greek church subsists, at this day, at Constantinople, under the sceptre of Mahomet. But how does it subsist? Like the tree that had suffered excision in the dream of the Chaldean monarch, its root indeed remains in the earth, with a band of iron and brass, and it is wet with the dew of heaven, until certain times shall have passed over it; at the expiration of which it may come into remembrance before God, and again bud, and put forth its branches, and bear fruit, for the shadow and support of nations yet unknown. But at present, its condition is certainly not to be envied or coveted.

As Christians, let us, therefore, gratefully acknowledge the protection we receive. We are pilgrims, travelling through this world to another. The powers of the world must use us as they shall think

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proper, and it shall please God to permit them. Bad usage we are to bear with patience; for good usage it becomes us to be thankful. And if Israelites, when captives in Babylon, were enjoined by a prophet to pray for a heathen king who had carried them into captivity, "that in his peace they might "have peace;" how much more ought we to pray in our own land, for our own prince, who adorns by his life, the faith which, by his office, he stands engaged to defend; that so Christianity, which is the religion of peace, may thrive and flourish in the soil natural to it! Continue to us, then, O Lord, we beseech thee, him whom thou hast hitherto preserved. "Grant the "king a long life:" bless him in his person, in his actions, in his family, and in his people: make his days prosperous, and the close of them, when it must come, honourable and comfortable; that, through thy grace and goodness, it may open for him an entrance into that kingdom, where only temptation shall cease, and trouble shall be known no more.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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